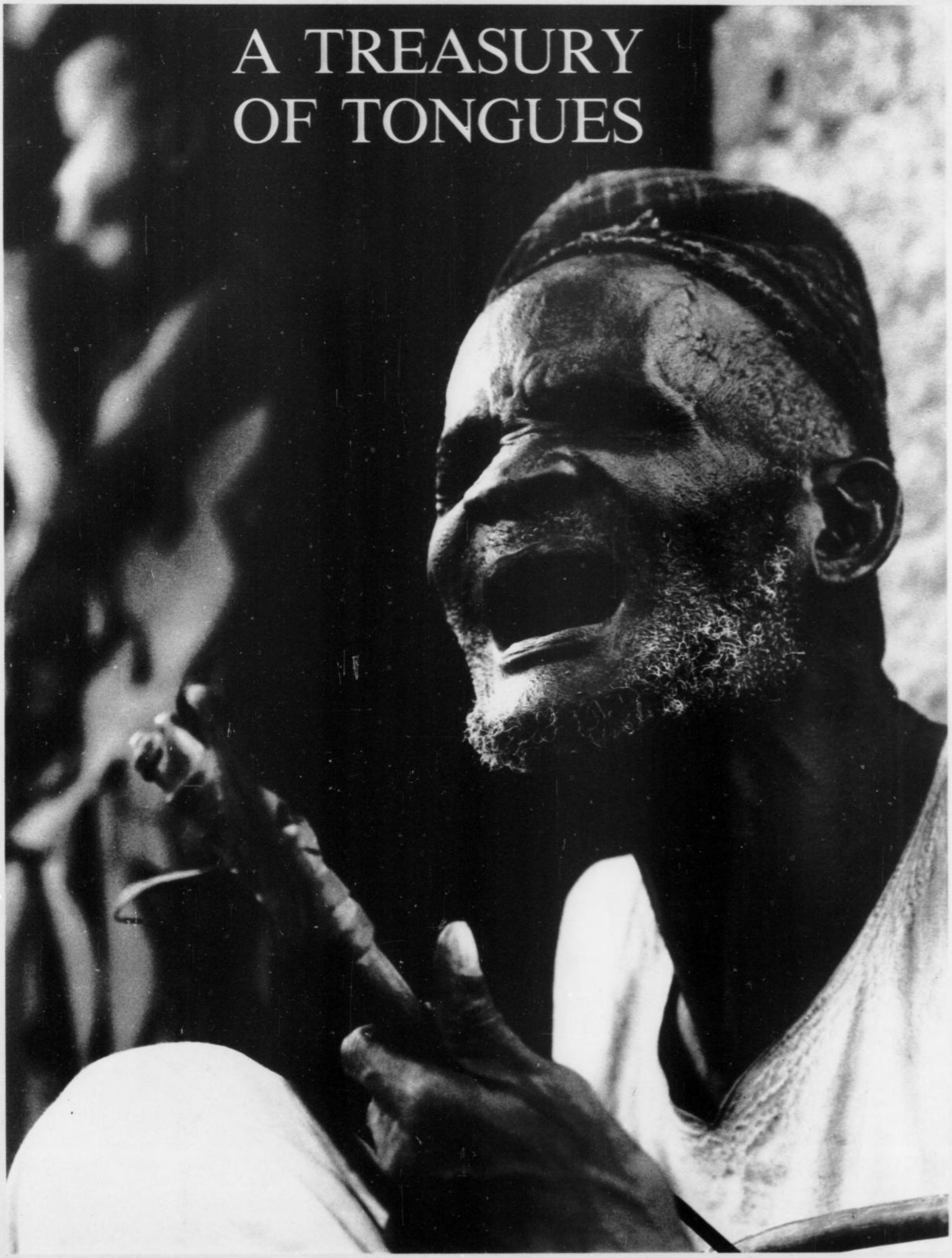
The Unesco Courier

JULY 1983 - 6 French francs

A TREASURY OF TONGUES



A time to live...

Photo © Paul Almasy, Paris

15 GUATEMALA — **When past meets present**

As well as the official language, Spanish, some 20 Indian dialects, most of them of Mayan origin, are spoken in Guatemala. The most widespread Indian languages are *Quiché* (the language in which the *Popol Vuh,* an invaluable 16th- century source book on Mayan mythology and culture was written), *Cakchiquel, Kekchí* and *Mam*. Above, the present encounters the past in a museum in Guatemala city.

The Unesco Courier

A window open on the world

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page

I. A TALKING ANIMAL

4 **Burgess, Anthony**
Our greatest possession
6 **Fyle, Clifford**
National languages and cultural identity
8 **Glissant, Edouard**
Beyond Babel

II. A TREASURY OF TONGUES

10 **Balmir, Guy Claude**
Black English
12 **Bareiro Saguier, Rubén**
The Indian languages of Latin America
14 **Confiant, Raphael and Prudent, L. Félix**
Creole—language of the Caribbean
16 **Kedros, André**
When Greek meets Greek
18 **Miron, Gaston**
'The first one'
19 Bonjour Québec
19 **Pattanayak, Debiprasanna**
India, a multilingual subcontinent
21 **Sanghi, Vladimir Mikhailovich**
The story of an alphabet
23 'Tell me fi its really what yuh feel'
by Michael Smith
24 Dan is deh man in deh van
by Mighty Sparrow
25 **Vallverdú, Francesc**
Spain's language mosaic

III. THE THREE Ts—
TEACHING, TRANSLATING, TRANSCRIBING

28 **Charaudeau, Patrick**
The culture shock of language learning
29 **Lilova, Anna**
The translation explosion
31 **Pekhlivanov, Ilya**
Bulgaria's first language laboratory

33 **AUTHORS**

34 **UNESCO NEWSROOM**

2 **A TIME TO LIVE...**
GUATEMALA: When past meets present

Editorial

TO take account of the universality of human language and of the diversity of forms which language takes is a task beyond the possibilities of a magazine. And so, even if this special issue of the Unesco Courier *resembles a dictionary in its presentation, readers will not find in it a panoramic survey, still less a detailed inventory, of the languages used in the world, nor a study of the various possible systems of transcription.*

We hope, all the same, that the dozen or more articles on the following pages will give readers an impression of the unity as well as the phenomenal riches of the world's treasury of tongues. However, we have decided to adopt a largely socio-cultural approach to the problem of languages, presenting for reflection certain points which are particularly significant and which also lie at the heart of Unesco's thinking and action.

The supreme instrument of communication, a tool for teaching and learning, a vector of civilization, the spoken or written language remains the mainstay, the key to the cultural identity of both groups and individuals. In this context, the right to be taught in and to speak one's mother tongue is a fundamental right, and one which Unesco stubbornly defends.

Linguistic diversity is seen today, not as a cause of fragmentation, a hindrance to effective communication between cultures, but, through a multitude of individual cases, from country to country and continent to continent, as the precondition of dialogue between peoples and cultures.

Time and again, our contributors denounce the linguistic "racism" which honours the written above the spoken word or which judges certain languages to be innately inferior to others. All of them, not least the linguists, condemn these attitudes based on false premises and stress the fundamental equality of all languages that transcends their differences. Any disequilibrium between languages is always the result of historical and economic circumstance, never of any inherent defect in a particular language. In the last analysis, re-establishing a language balance is as much a question of collective as of political will.

To diminish further the world's rich linguistic diversity, already in part stifled, would be a dangerous course to take. As this issue of the Unesco Courier *makes clear, strategies for the preservation of this diversity are as varied as the situations the different languages face; on their rapid and successful implementation depends the development, in the widest sense of the term, of that diverse unity mankind.*

Cover: All the power and human warmth of the spoken word are manifest in the intense expression on the face of this blind *griot* (African poet, musician and story-teller).
Photo © Claude Sauvageot, Paris

I. A talking animal

BURGESS, Anthony

Our greatest possession

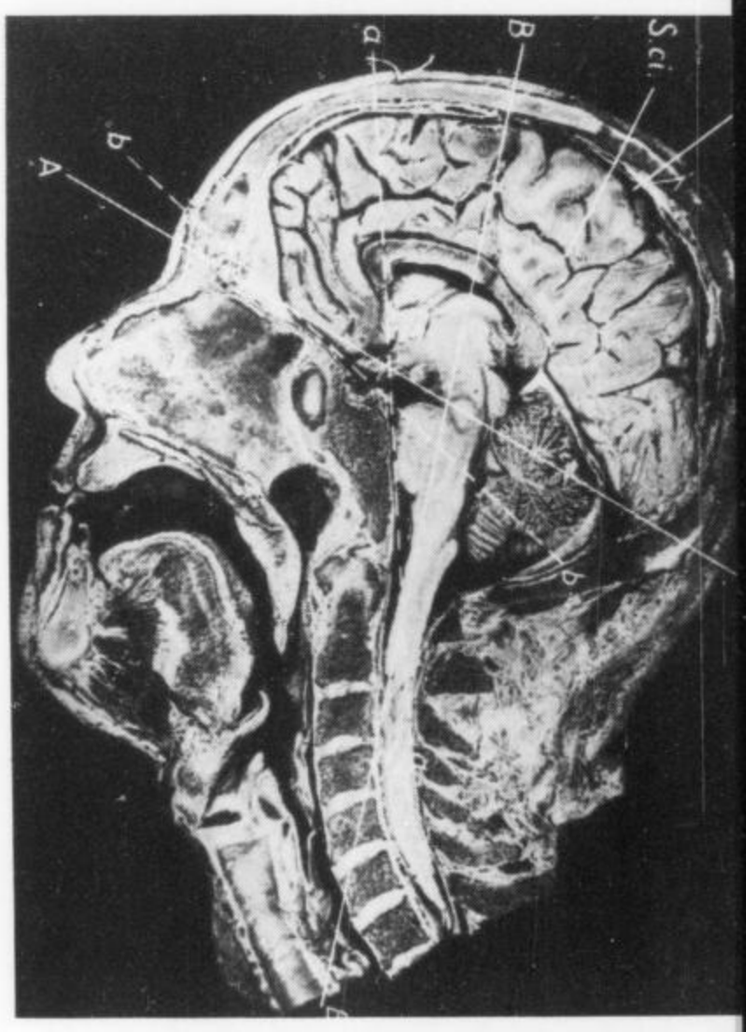
Man is called in Greek the *Zoon phonanta* or talking animal. What makes humanity different from the brute creation is its capacity for constructing a system of auditory signs which stand not only for its thoughts and feelings about the outside world but for the outside world itself. You will say at once that certain birds talk and some of them, such as mynahs, talk very well. Chimpanzees can be taught a number of words and a few simple linguistic structures. But only human beings are defined by their capacity to originate whole languages, not merely mimic parts of them or handle a few nouns and verbs. When an animal began to talk, that animal called itself man.

We all have a vague, and totally false, notion of very primitive man making a few Tarzan grunts and howling vocables, usually at the same time accompanying these gruff melodies on the drum of his chest. But human language almost certainly did not begin like that. It began as a continuous babble and it probably began in the dark. The dark is always frightening, especially when one is alone in it, and man learned very early in his career to maintain the sense of society, the comforting conviction that he was not alone, when the sun went out and the moon had not risen and the cave had no lamp. Speech certainly came before the discovery of fire. We still tend to use speech not for conveying messages or expressing feelings but merely for establishing and sustaining human contact.

The anthropologist Malinowski called this kind of social speech "phatic communion", *phatic* deriving from the Greek *phatos*, meaning spoken. The act of speaking, the speech act, serves primarily the end of sociability. It does not have to mean anything, but it has to be continuous. At dinner parties a prolonged silence is the most embarrassing thing in the world: it seems to indicate that sociability has failed. It is often broken by more than one person's speaking at the same time—excuse me—sorry—after you—no, after you—and what is said is far less important than the fact of somebody having said something, anything. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief, especially the hostess.

We have no means of knowing what the language of, say, Stone Age man was like, but we know something of that ancient language known as Indo-European or Aryan because its structure and some of its vocabulary, much changed, survive in the daughter languages, which means most of the languages of Europe. It seems to have been a complex language, with a rich grammar, not at all like Malay or Chinese, and it is fairly certain that the further back we go in our study of language the greater complexities we find.

The simplification of language is essentially a part of the modernization of language: modern English is grammatically much simpler than its ancestor Anglo-Saxon, and Italian and Spanish are much simpler than their mother Latin. It is wrong to think of the first talkers taking a few linguistic bricks, cementing them together, then baking more bricks and adding them to make a more and more imposing structure. An original babble was associated with a particular feeling or thought, but it was only in the period after, say,



There no longer seems to be any doubt either about the deep-seated unity of all languages spoken throughout the world or about the extension of this unity to all three main aspects of human language—phonological, syntactical and semantic. The innate character of the profound structures in these three fields appears to be confirmed.

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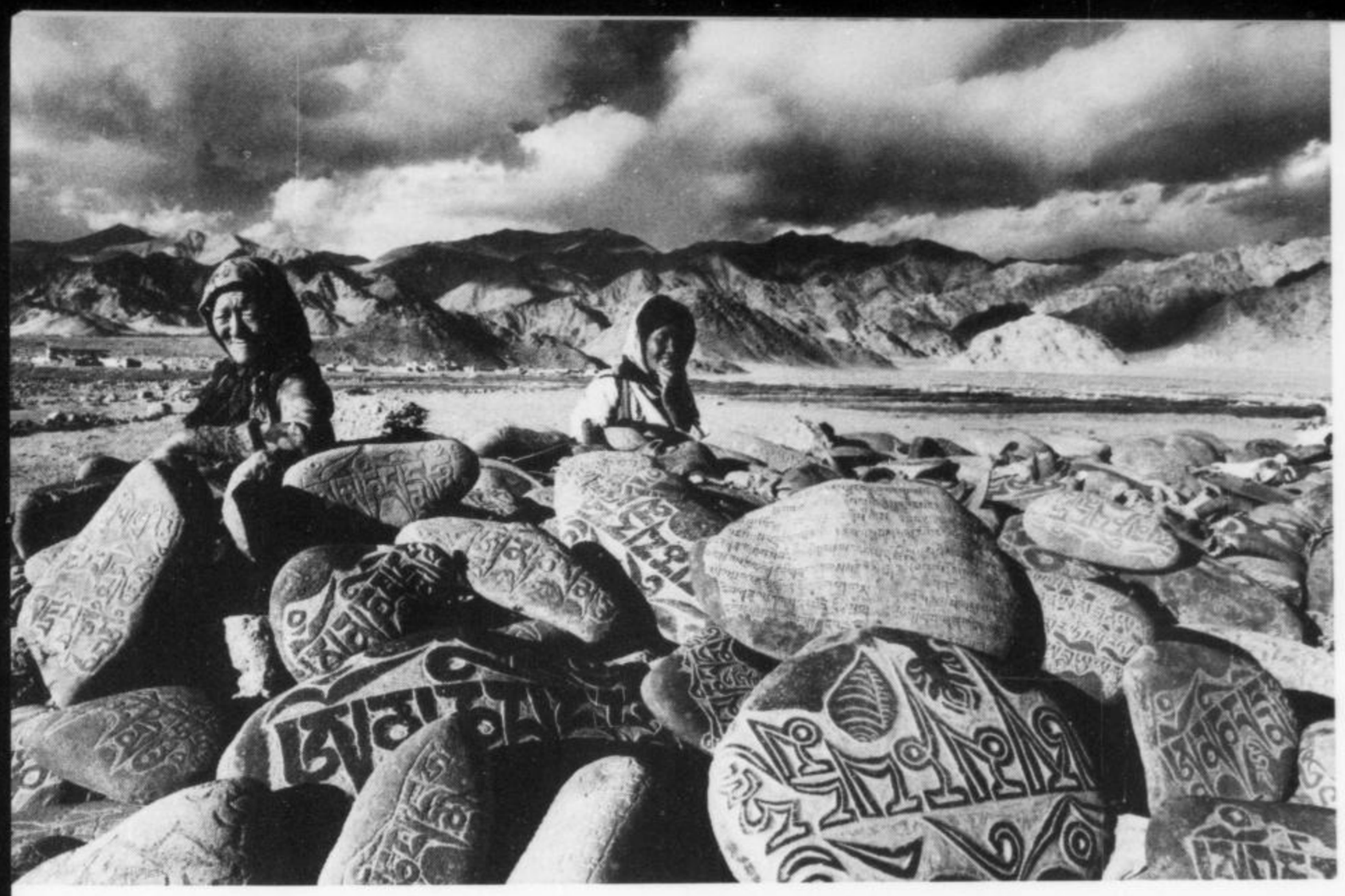


A prayer wall* (mani-wall) *in the Ladhak region of northern India. In former times each pilgrim added a stone on which the monks engraved sacred expressions.

Photo © Raphael Gaillarde, Paris

the break-up of the Roman Empire that the specialists we call grammarians began to analyse the component parts of this babble and come up with terms like noun, verb, adjective, adverb.

Noam Chomsky, the most important, certainly the most influential, specialist in linguistic theory that the post-war period has produced, has suggested that every human being has built into his skull an apparatus that equips him to master the whole of language, any language. We all say things we never said before, and without much conscious effort; we're always inventing new things to say; we have within us an apparently infinite capacity for generating new statements. That is the great human endowment. This endowment is based, however, on a very simple peculiarity of the human brain—its capacity to think in opposed structures.

Look at it this way: the spectrum has innumerable colours in it, and one merges into another. Man learned to pick out colours as separable items. He did more; he learned how to make them into signs of opposed meaning. You have only to think of a traffic signal to see that this is so. Now out of the babble of noise which the human vocal system is capable of producing it is possible to separate specific sounds and oppose one to the other. *Pick* does not mean the same as *pig,* because /k/ is opposed to /g/, though those two sounds only differ (in English, anyway) in that one is breathed and the other sung. This structuralist gift of the human brain enables us to talk of phonemes (speech sounds) and morphemes (combinations of phonemes that convey meaning)—tiny structures that oppose each other in doing separate jobs and, taken together, add up to a language.

What interests us most is why a word should mean what it does. If primitive man wanted to indicate that something was high he probably instinctively stretched up his arm, just as he brought it down to indicate that something was low. In other words, he used a mimetic or imitative faculty. There is no evidence to show that the physical gestures which are speech (after all, you use your vocal organs very athletically to produce phonemes) were attempts at imitating the things or actions or feelings described. *Moon* and *luna* and *bulan* suggest something round and high (the lips pout and the front of the tongue is raised almost to touch the roof of the mouth, which the Malay language calls the *langit* or heaven), but such imitative words are very rare indeed. *Dog* does not sound like a dog, nor does *cat* suggest a cat. If you want the technical terms, language is not iconic symbolism. Words are very arbitrary things. If it is suddenly decided that *cat* shall mean not a cat but a dog, it may take some time to accept the idea, but there is nothing intrinsically illogical about it.

With no evidence at all, I think of primitive man looking up at the moon and saying something like *garavapolagiya*. He does not mean *moon*; he means: there is a situation in which I

How many languages are there in the world in 1983? The answer depends on what is meant by language and the way in which languages are differentiated from dialects. Estimates thus vary between 2,500 and some 5,000. Below,* The Tower of Babel, *by the Flemish painter Martin van Valkenborch the Elder (1535-1612).

Photo © Bruckmann-Giraudon, Paris. Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, GDR

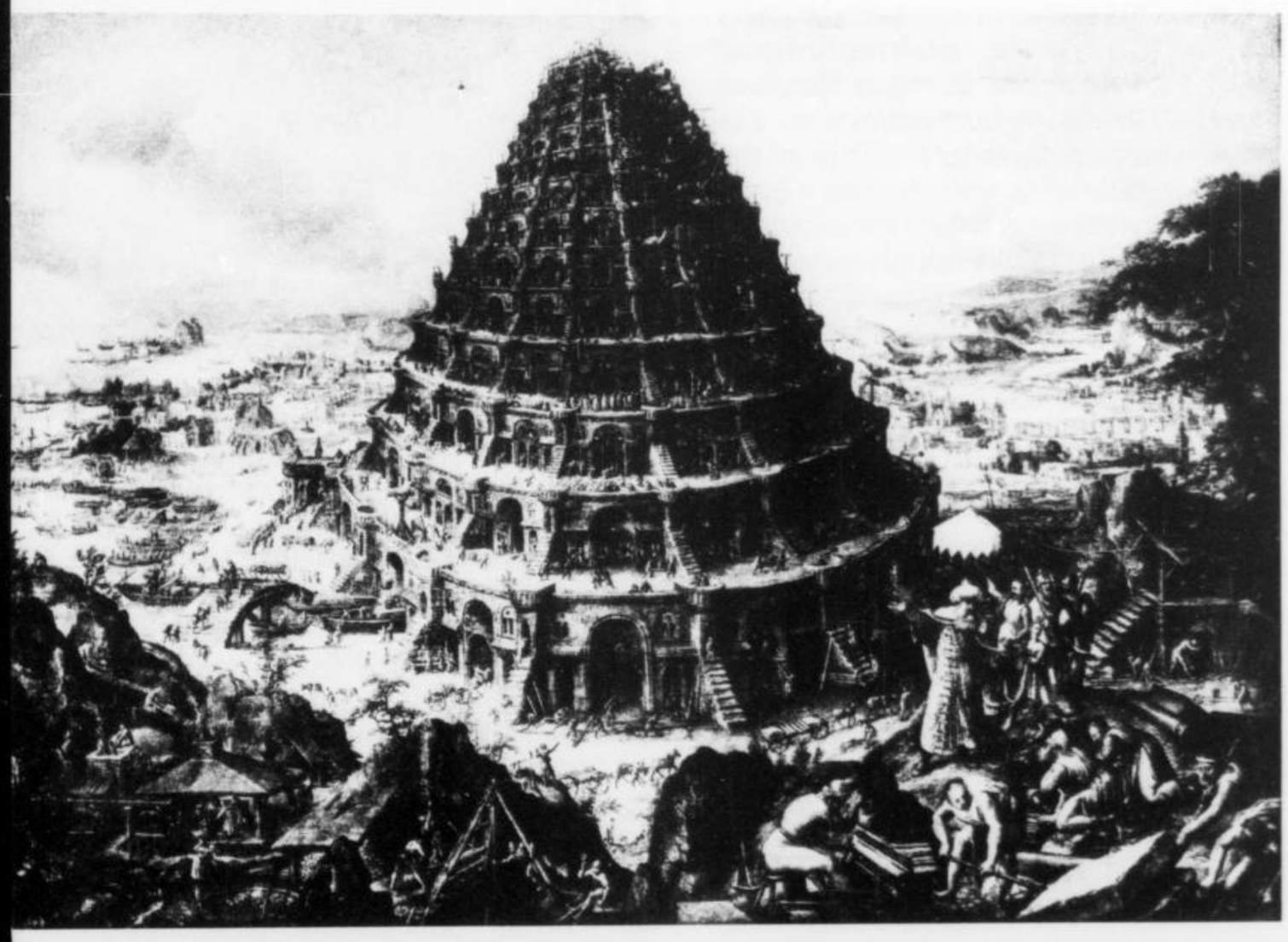


Photo © Birger Larsson, Stockholm, Sweden

The name of this little wayside station in Wales is Llanfairpwll-gwyngy-llgogerychwyrndrobwyll -llantysiliogogogoch. It means "The church of St.Mary in the hollow of the white hazel tree near the rapid whirlpool by the church of St. Dysilio by the red cave."

am here looking at that round object in the sky which began low and is getting higher. In the morning, seeing the sun rise, he might say something like *garasopolagiya*. It would take him a very long time to separate out the vocables *vapo* for moon and *sopo* for sun, and to understand that the *po* in both had something to do with their both being heavenly bodies apparently capable of rising and setting. In other words, the analytic approach to his own speech which we take for granted—without it we could not learn foreign languages—was something that it would take him many thousands of years to learn. As for being able to write speech down in ideograms or letters—well, that came very late indeed. The Western alphabet—Latin, Greek or Arabic—is an idea so new that it still hasn't caught on in China or Japan.

We are, it has to be confessed, almost totally ignorant of the origins of human language, but we do know that it was the evolutionary breakthrough which produced the species we call man. And when language first appeared it was already fully grown: it was not a tentative groping towards greater and greater articulacy. The symbolization of the outside world (which includes our own bodies) was the key to the creation of inside worlds—sciences and technologies. Language is our greatest possession. We would be wise to ponder on its mysteries and cherish the miracle that it is. But we will never be able to understand it. Chinese and Hindi and English, yes. Language itself, no. ■

FYLE, Clifford

National languages and cultural identity

The grammar, the proverbs, and the idioms of a language give us a clear understanding of how its mother tongue users think and feel, and they do this more completely than anything else can. The vocabulary is the sum total of all the objects, actions and ideas that affect them or that they need to know in their environment. Their literature expresses the best of what they have experienced and felt over the years.

It is for these reasons that language is an expression of the personality of the group, a means of identifying its members according to their culture. When, for example, we say "I am Italian" or "I am Yoruba", we are identifying ourselves as members of a particular cultural group using a particular language.

This kind of identification is important. It provides authenticity for an individual, in the sense of rooting him firmly within his community, of bonding him with others of the same culture. In this respect, language is a great unifying factor. One can in fact say that an important essential for any unified society is that all its members should speak the same language.

This is why in many developing countries there has been so much interest in a single national language, which is seen among other things as a means of achieving national unity. It becomes imperative to teach a language, its literature and its oral traditions to its users, so that they can have a proper appreciation of their own culture.

This is necessary even when the users are in their home environment; it becomes even more so when they are removed from this environment but may have to return to it. This is the case, for example, with the families of migrant workers, who for various reasons have taken employment in other countries, but whose children at least have to preserve their own culture and may wish to return to their home environment. These migrant workers, however, also have to learn the language of the other country in which they find themselves, so that, at least for the duration of their stay, they can integrate also into these new communities.

Since a person's mother tongue is the language in which he is most adept, in which he can best express himself, which he can best understand, it follows that it is the language in which, for him, learning can best take place. For this reason, there has developed the worldwide educational principle that all education is best achieved when it is given through the medium of the learner's own language.

Countries seeking to achieve rapid development for their peoples need rapidly also to provide education for all their citizens. Only by mobilizing their total manpower and putting it to effective use will they be able to make the economic strides that they desire. This means mass education, the mass teaching of reading and writing, a constant flow of information and constant communication, teaching of new habits and new attitudes, and not least of all, training in new skills. All this is impossible without a vast national mass education programme. A country's leaders are usually quick to realize that such a programme can only succeed if it is conducted in the language or languages with which their people are familiar.

At this point it is useful to reject the popular linguistic fiction that some languages are incapable of being used for certain educational purposes. The truth is that any language, any one at all, is a complete and perfect medium of expression and can be used to teach anything. Initially it may not have enough words to cope with a new situation or a new field of activity, but whenever this happens the simple principle for all languages, in developed and developing countries alike, is that they either create new words or borrow them from other languages. The only

Photo © C. and B. Desjeux-L'Harmattan, Paris

In Africa, make-up, tattooing and scarifications conveyed information about a woman's status and family. Today the symbolic meanings of this "language" are still far from dying out. Above, a young Peul woman from Benin.

problem for developing countries is that, with the abundance of new situations their languages have to face in being used for modern education, borrowings have to be rapid, organized, and are therefore generally expensive.

What are the major problems involved in promoting and using national languages as a means of reinforcing cultural identity, and as educational instruments?

The initial problem is that of which language to choose, particularly in countries with large numbers of peoples using different languages. It does not always help to say that one must choose the language of the greatest number of speakers, because sometimes there are two or more groups equal or almost equal in strength, or there may be a minority group which is socially or economically more significant than a majority group. The problem is not as serious for countries with only one language each; but even they do not escape it entirely. This single language usually has a number of dialects—that is to say, the language, though basically the same, is used in distinctly varying forms in different parts of the country.

This explains why a number of developing countries have still not been able to choose their national languages. For example, of the forty-five States in sub-Saharan Africa, there are some eleven which still have to make the decision. It also explains why, in the countries which have made the decision, the term "national language" has been interpreted in different ways and correspondingly different choices have been made. There are the cases where a country has decided on one language as a national language. Tanzania is an example of this. Then there are the cases of multiple adoption. Some countries merely choose a few of their many languages as national. Others go further and add a few others for use at some levels of formal education. Still others go further and add a number of other languages for purposes of literacy teaching.

One problem facing all these countries is the dominance of the old colonial languages, usually English, French or Portuguese. Traditionally, all education in the Western sense of the word has been given in these languages, often for well over a hundred years. This has led to the assumption that modern education is only meaningful if it is given in one of these languages. The assumption is false because, as we have noted above, given vocabulary development, any language can be used to teach anything. But it is such a widespread assumption in developing countries that it often acts as an effective barrier against the development and use of the country's own languages.

But languages such as English, French and Portuguese affect the problem of African language development and use in another way. These languages are international languages, and so for the purposes of international communication at least, the developing countries wish to retain the one they have been used to and to see that it is effectively taught. In face of this, the problem arises of how much use can be made of the countries' own languages as instruments of education, no matter how the term "national language" is interpreted.

But the biggest problem of all is the practical problem of research and the availability of materials. Some of the heavily multilingual countries still have not been able to determine exactly how many languages are within their borders and how many persons speak each language, not to mention producing the linguistic grammars and dictionaries needed as basic reference works for the use of these languages. There is also a need for educational research into the proper curricula and methodology for teaching the languages *in* the languages. Then there is the need to provide primers, readers and other materials for literacy and other forms of education.

Another problem is that of minority languages. Except for the few States which have only one language or which have decided on the adoption of all their languages as national, all developing nations are faced with a minority language problem. And when we consider that a country like Nigeria with possibly some 400 languages has decided to adopt only three as national, and that Kenya with some ninety-four languages has decided to adopt only one, Kiswahili, we can appreciate the scope of the minority language problem. Properly used, minority languages can contribute very greatly to the enrichment of the national culture and enrich and inform national education. Yet very few countries, if any, seem to have discovered exactly how to take them into account. In Africa only Tanzania seems to have taken some action, and that only by way of looking for words from these languages to enrich the vocabulary of Kiswahili. So important is the use of national languages seen to be for purposes of national unity, identity and development that more and more of the developing countries are facing up to these problems. The statistics would seem to bear this out. They are available for fifty African States, and they indicate that whereas in 1976, twenty-eight of these States had more or less clear language policies and ongoing programmes, mostly at the primary level, for the use of their African languages in education, by 1980, eleven more countries had declared national language policies, and six more had initiated primary level programmes. By 1982, some twenty to twenty-five of them were teaching African languages as subjects in secondary education, and ten were actually using the languages as media of instruction at this level. ■

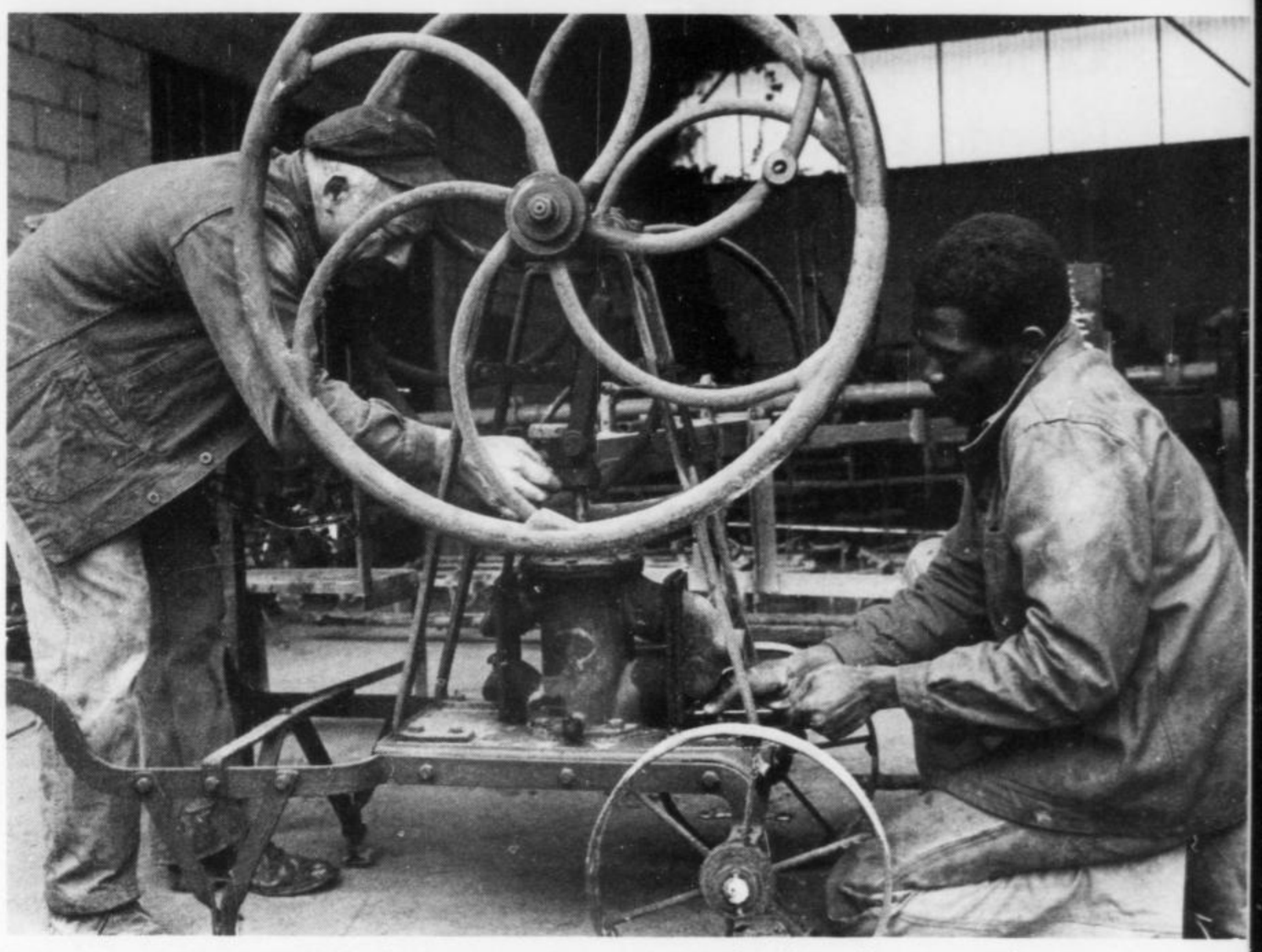


Photo Pierre Michaud © Rapho, Paris

Unesco's activities on behalf of migrant workers and their families reflect two major preoccupations. On the one hand they seek to help second-generation migrants to adapt to living conditions in the host country, chiefly by obtaining a command of the language. They are also concerned with preparing migrant workers for integration in their home countries by providing the children with an opportunity to learn their mother tongue and to acquire a knowledge of their national culture. Above, an African migrant worker in France.

GLISSANT, Edouard

Beyond Babel

"Live in confinement or live with an open, receptive attitude to others." It is often maintained that the right of each people to speak its own language boils down to this straightforward choice, which in point of fact legitimizes premises inherited from a tradition of domination. Either you speak a language which is "universal" or is tending to become so, and you participate in the life of the great world; or else you withdraw into your own idiom, which is so little suited to being shared with others. If you take the latter course, you cut yourself off from the world and languish isolated and sterile within your so-called identity.

However, since so many liberated peoples have taken their place on the world stage, it has come to be felt that the language of a community is the primary vector of its cultural identity, which in turn underlies all the dimensions of its development. This desire to privilege the cultural dimension, known as "culturalism", has been stigmatized as dubious if not harmful. At the same time every development process has been reduced to a single kind of technology, said to be advanced and inevitable. What more can you ask for, when a single language can offer you the key to progress?

From the point of view of language and culture, the world's nations would seem to have no choice apart from that between confinement in a restrictive particularity on the one hand, and on the other, dilution in the "generalizing universal". From this dangerous theoretical construction, the "spoken genius" of the peoples of the world has brought a brilliant release. Even crushed by the products of pseudo-progress, the voice of the African *griots,* the story-tellers marooned on the edges of big cities, still obstinately refuses to disappear. Governments are gradually coming round to the idea that there is no single, transcendent model of development that can be imposed everywhere.

The relations between languages today are, then, characterized, in the explosion of our unbelievable diversity, both by creations which come like a bolt from the blue, born of the "friction" between languages, and by a mass of received ideas and prejudices passively inherited from the past.

Perhaps the most crucial of these received ideas has to do with the traditional hierarchic division of languages into the written and the oral. The latter were reputedly crude, unfitted for conceptualization and as a result for the true acquisition and transmission of knowledge. The former were "civilizing"; they allowed men to emerge from their "natural state", endowing them with a context of permanence and giving them a destiny.

It is true that literacy teaching on a massive scale is a task of the highest priority and that it is often carried out, for want of suitable materials, in what are known as the vehicular languages of communication. But it is increasingly felt that literacy instruction in the strict sense should go hand in hand with the teaching of "cultural literacy" which widens the spectrum of choices and permits autonomous creative forces to be revived *from within.*

Between those languages which are supposedly entrenched in the transcendence of writing and the rest, which have long been confined to what was called with a hint of condescension the world of oral expression, relations are thus complex and infinitely various.

Domination is, of course, the characteristic of the most flagrant of these forms of relationship, one which is buttressed by technological expansion and which usually opens the way to the trivialization and neutralization of culture. However carefully devised, the way out of this paralyzing uniformity, this banishment of dominated languages into the restricted realms of folklore and non-technological areas of expression, does not lie in a universal language but in the promotion of a plurilingualism in which all the languages would be associated, each responsible for its own environment.

Fascination is the second of these relationships. Admittedly this fascination is becoming less and less virulent; nonetheless it has incited the intellectual élites of the developing countries to use a prestige language in a reverent and distorting way, thereby impoverishing themselves.

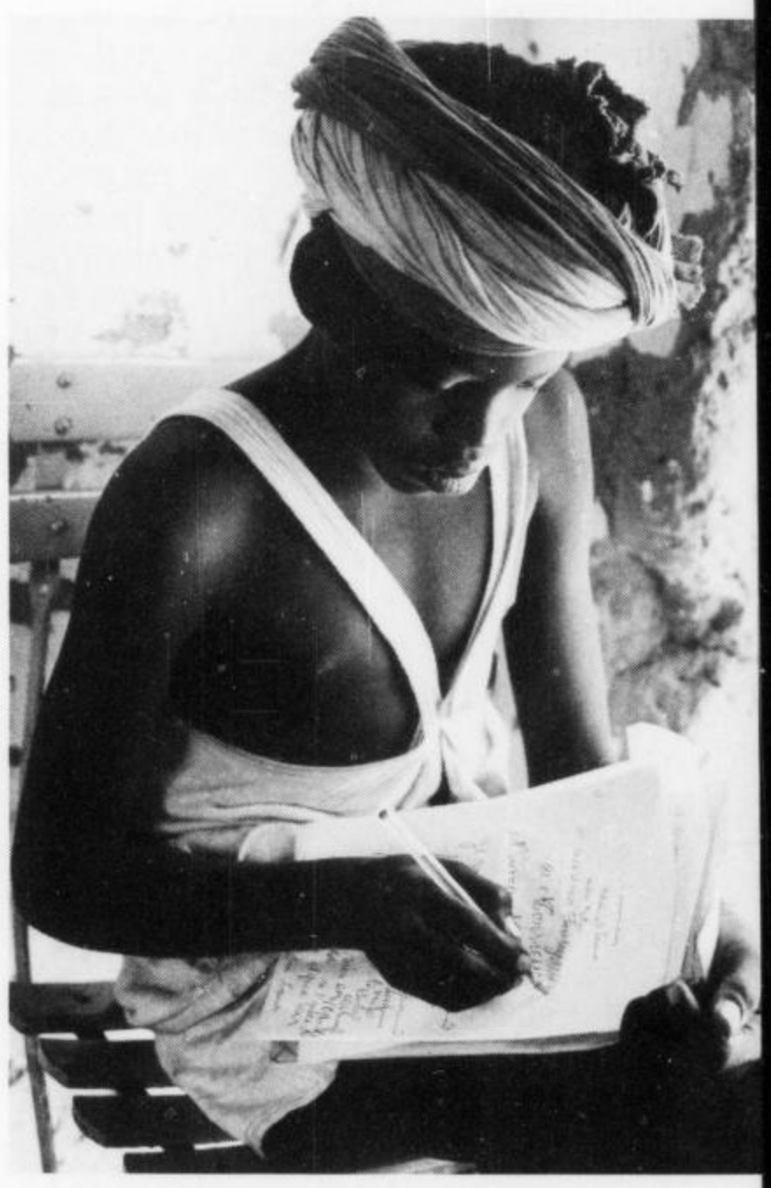
Relationships based on contagion occur when melting pots explode and yield unexpected forms which are found above all in the language used by young people. Purists are shocked by such mixtures; poets who are alert to the intermingling of world cultures are delighted. Linguistic "purity" is no longer a valid criterion, and "borrowings" should only be condemned when they uphold political, economic and cultural domination.

Relations based on compliance and derision may occur, for example, through frequentation of tourist spots; or are products of the very practices of subordination. This tendency to encourage the birth of hybrid "Tarzan" languages is swept away when peoples and nations take a firm grip on their own cultures.

Tangential relationships are by far the most insidious. They occur whenever composite, compromise languages appear, such as the Creoles of the French-speaking parts of the Americas and the Indian Ocean. In such cases it is necessary to neutralize the erosion of the new language, which in a sense takes place from *within* the language when one of its components from afar becomes the dominant factor in their relationship.

Subversive relations, when a language is "melted down" by a community and put to a new use, often as a vehicle for criticism. In the case of the English language the English-speaking West Indians and the Blacks of the United States provide notable examples of this phenomenon; the people of Quebec, in the case of French.

Relations based on intolerance arise especially in the teaching of a major language of communication. These stem from the fact that "atavistic fluency" in the use of a language has hitherto been tacitly considered indispensable in achieving mastery of that language. The language was presented, on a take it or leave it basis, as wedded to its past history and therefore intransigently hostile to the dreadful contagions to which it might be forced to "submit" by speakers and creators from elsewhere. Theories of teaching and learning the language in question could only be developed in its "original home".



Above, a Mauritanian village schoolboy concentrates on his homework. Mauritania has two official languages, Arabic and French.

But these distinctions between the written and the oral do not only date from the recent past. In some cases they have existed for a long time, creating a rift within a single language by designating two often irreconcilable orders of expression—one learned, the other popular—for the same community.

The case of monolingual countries with "internal" problems (either because two usages—oral and written—of a single language may cause disruption; or because regional dialects integrated into the language have been crushed by the

uniformization of cultural practices; or because the national language is confronted with problems of transcription) is but one illustration of the inexhaustible variety of linguistic situations in the world today.

A list of such situations would include: monolingual countries with "external" problems. In this case a national language, which is also a major language of communication, is threatened economically and culturally by a "foreign" language.

Bilingual countries with "internal" problems: there is a confrontation between two widely used languages, each of which is used by a part of the community, which is consequently destabilized.

Countries where diglossia exists; a major language of communication tends to dominate and restrict one or several mother tongues, sometimes until the latter completely disappear.

Multilingual countries without apparent problems: a federative principle governs relations between languages in a single nation.

Multilingual countries where the existence of a large number of mother tongues makes it difficult to choose one or several official languages.

These situations overlap, exist side by side, proliferate, transcending the straightforward conflict between the oral and the written. They are spectacular instances of the relations between peoples and cultures. Their complexity rules out any summary or reductive assessment of the strategies which might be employed. There is no single solution.

This very complexity also makes it possible to emerge from confinement. Speaking one's own language does not exclude a receptive, open-minded attitude to other people and their cultures. "I speak to you in *your* language, and it is in *mine* that I understand you."

But the possibility of speaking its own language above all offers to a people the liberty to create, at all levels, by and through its language. In other words, the means of concretizing its relationship with and place in the world.

Viewed in this light, it is by no means certain that languages with an oral tradition are fundamentally at a disadvantage. It even seems that, with a great flexibility and adaptability, they are more in tune with today's linguistic ferment. More, perhaps than languages which have a written tradition and are ossified in time-worn ways, they are suited to the changing demands of audio-visual techniques. Whether this is a weakness or a strength, it indicates a greater flexibility and availability. The problems of standardization and transcription, when the results of scholarly research have been used by the communities concerned, may lead to compromise solutions which will gradually be sanctioned and systematized.

Vast and dizzying possibilities are opening up, transcending fierce struggles against economic domination. This is not the pre-apocalyptic dizziness which precedes the fall of the tower of Babel, but the tremors of creativity confronted with these boundless possibilities. The Tower can be built, *in all languages.* ■

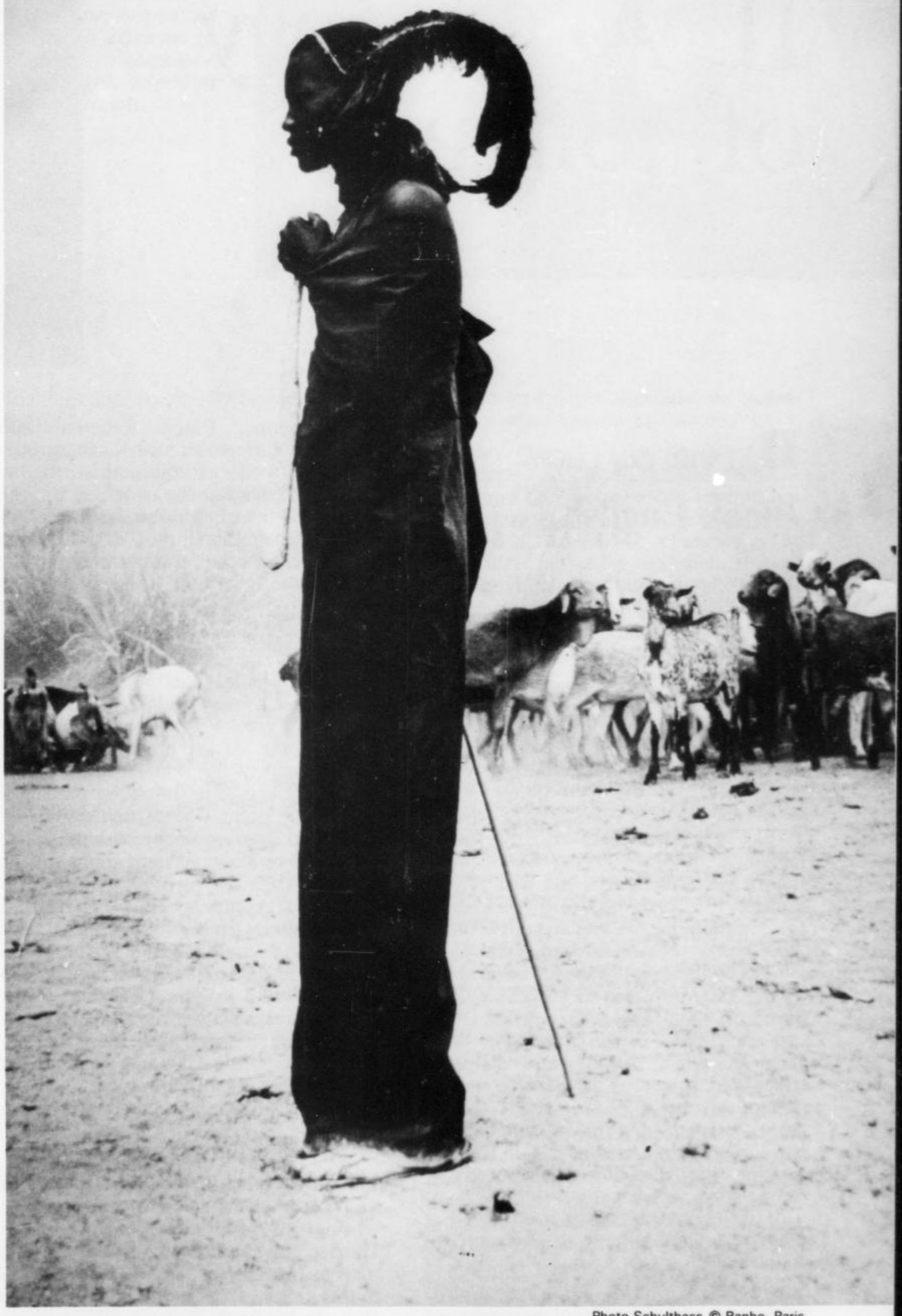


Photo Paul Almasy, Unesco

Photo Schulthess © Rapho, Paris

Nomad pastoral farmers, the Masai people live in parts of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, countries where Swahili is the official language.

Symbolically depicted, words pour from the mouth of a Toltec warrior in this Aztec bas-relief from Chichen Itza (Mexico).

Photo © C.N.R.S., Paris

II. A treasury of tongues

BALMIR, Guy Claude

Black English

Since the publication, in 1972, of Joey Lee Dillard's erudite study *Black English*, it is no longer possible to dismiss the Black North American's way of speaking as "a vague and artificial lingo". To be fair, this disdainful outburst of the journalist and literary critic H.L. Mencken, normally more circumspect and balanced in his judgements, referred only to the period before the American Civil War.

Like the members of any mixed language group trying to make themselves understood, the first Blacks reduced to slavery in North America at the beginning of the seventeenth century must have communicated, with the Whites and amongst themselves, in some kind of *lingua franca*, or Pidgin English. Some of them would already have had some experience of this aboard the slave ships on which slaves from different tribes were mixed up so as to lessen the risk of escape plots or revolt. Others from the West African coast might have learnt one of the forms of Pidgin English which, like the Portuguese Pidgins before them, were known to have been used during the sixteenth century as a form of *lingua franca* associated with the slave trade.

It should not be forgotten that multilingualism and vehicular languages are traditional in Africa because of the continent's great diversity of languages, or that, even today, many Anglo-West African Pidgins still persist (*krio* in Sierra Leone, Pidgin Liberian and *wescos* in Cameroon and Nigeria). Furthermore, other Pidgins exist in the United States, such as that of the Chinese, for example, or of certain Indians, like the Seminoles, who at times lived in close relationship with runaway slaves.

The basic *lingua franca* of the slaves born in Africa was continually being renewed by successive arrivals, and at the same time a patois was developing which served as a new vehicular language among the creoles, or slaves born in captivity. Some slaves, however, acquired the language of the Whites, either by being taught it or else simply by picking it up, to the point where runaway slaves succeeded in escaping by forging passes "signed" by their masters. Thus, in the words of Dillard, "by the end of the eighteenth century, slaves from Massachusetts to South Carolina used varieties of English ranging from West African Pidgin to (nearly) Standard English", and including, of course, the Creole of the plantations. The planters themselves, as well as their children brought up by Black women servants and in daily contact with young Black playmates, gradually became bilingual in Creole and English or, in Louisiana, in Creole and French.

The Creole of the plantations reached its peak in the nineteenth century. The writings of both negrophiles, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, and negrophobes such as N. Beverly Tucker, bear witness to its vitality in the period up to the Civil War. In his book *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, published in 1870, Thomas Wentworth Higginson not only left us some of the finest examples we have of Creole, but also gave an indication of its links with the Gullah Creole, now an isolated dialect, of the coastal regions and offshore islands of South Carolina and Georgia.

During the 1940s, Lorenzo Turner discovered in Gullah many African borrowings: names of the days of the week given to children (Cuffy-Friday, Kwame-Saturday, Quashee-Sunday, etc.), and common nouns and verbs such as goober-peanut, tote-carry, buckra-white

Photo © The Museum of Modern Art, New York

man, nyam-yam, as well as banjo, gumbo and jazz. The use of tote is recorded from 1677 and as early as 1782 Benjamin Franklin employed the word "boccarorra" (buckra) when writing about a white man.

After the Emancipation and the Reconstruction, the Negro speech of the plantations underwent a gradual process of "decreolisation", moving closer to Standard English, although in the rural areas, where schooling was less widespread, it survived much longer, as witness the accounts in *Lay My Burden Down*; *A Folk History of Slavery*, published in 1945, an anthology of writings of generations spanning a period long before that date.

As a result, twentieth-century Black English, through a process of mutual interactions and influences, though not identical, has become closer to that of white southerners—at least in its phonology. But Dillard draws attention to certain characteristics of its grammar and recalls the richness of its slang, especially that of the urban centres of the North where migrants from the South settled. What "blues" or "gospel" fan is unaware of the Negro meaning of "soul" or of its derivative "soul music"?

It cannot be denied that Black American vernacular has given birth to a speech form, even a literature, which is distinct from that of the dominant culture, a language the group recognized as its own and in which it expresses its collective consciousness. It was thanks to the fecundity of their gestural "motor" memory that these Africans, plunged into a European/Protestant environment which effaced their residual "image" memory, were able to structure the experience they were obliged to live out in the concentration-camp world of slavery, then in a state of serfdom dosed with lynchings and, finally, in the racist urban ghettos.

In the United States after the emancipation of the slaves and the end of the Civil War, "the Negro speech of the plantations underwent a gradual process of 'decreolization', moving closer to Standard English". Left, "the old folks at home", a photo taken around 1899-1900 by Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952).

"It cannot be denied that Black American vernacular has given birth to a speech form, even a literature, which is distinct from that of the dominant culture, a language the group recognizes as its own and in which it expresses its collective consciousness." Right, singers of Negro spirituals.

Photo Herbert © Rapho, Paris

American neo-African expressionism is based essentially on three elements. First, rhythms, which in spite of the early (seventeenth century) banning of the native drum, at times expands to polyrhythm and at times adds syncopation to the songs adopted or invented in the new surroundings. Second, the art of improvisation which makes possible indeed ensures the constant re-invention of both music and words. Third, African-style antiphony, that is, the rhythmic division of the song, of the words between soloist and chorus, between the preacher, the leader of a game, the work leader and the group that participates and supports him with their responses.

These elements shape all the traditional forms; the religious forms, especially the sermon with participation of the congregation in which the preacher goes into a trance, declaring himself to be possessed of the Holy Spirit; the spiritual, transformations by the slaves of Protestant canticles into historio-myths; the sung preachment which was a happy combination of sermon and spirituals (and also non-religious forms such as work songs, adapted English and Scottish ballads, country and city blues, game songs and the pornographic poems of the ghettos known as "dozens").

Today "gospel" is really no more than a modern version of the old religious songs and the participatory sermon has moved into the towns where it occupies improvised store-front churches. The blues singer has stolen the limelight from the anonymous bards of the spirituals of bygone times, and the events of daily life rather than religious topics have become the theme of the blues. Nevertheless, by enriching jazz with its melodies and its tonality (the famous "blue notes" in particular) the blues form has provided a link between the traditional expressionism of song and the expressionism of instrumental intervention which has adopted all the elements of the Afro-American language including its vocabulary. What is jazz if not impromptu song, the voice of the Negro taken up by the instrument, just as, in early times, the beat of the banned drum was taken up by the feet and hands of the slaves? Is not "scat" the voice playing the role of the instrument? Or could it be the instrument which turns again to the voice? Here tongue and language become confounded, as though unconsciously, in their native ambiguity.

Nevertheless, although no mention has been made here of the theatre, the novel, or even of the improvised "jazz poetry" of the 1960s, it is to the "folklore" poets that we owe the final encounter between literature and "orature". In the past, Fenton Johnson, and later Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown, and today Raymond Patterson, by adopting popular forms and then adapting them into literary genres, have succeeded in giving back to the speech forms and language of Black Americans their beauty and their dignity. ■

BAREIRO SAGUIER, Rubén

The Indian languages of Latin America

With the death in April 1983 of "Abuela Rosa" (Grandmother Rose, the last of the *Yaganas*, once an important ethnic group in Southern Chile), a "vision of the world" as seen through an indigenous American culture was extinguished. It was another of the many such cultures which have disappeared since the European conquest and colonization of this continent started nearly five centuries ago.

Expert studies reveal that more than five hundred languages or dialects still survive in Latin America. They are grouped in twenty main families, established on the basis of different criteria—genetic-structural relations, grammatical-lexical kinships, or simple geographical groupings. The diversity and dissimilarity of these languages add to the mystery surrounding their origins. Indeed, explanations of the origin or cultural roots of the Amerindian people are still in the realm of hypothesis. Are they autogenous, or are they of Asiatic, Oceanic, African or runic origin? Or does their origin lie in a mixture of all these possibilities? At all events, serious investigations have revealed noteworthy analogies with such faraway languages as Finnish, Basque, Turko-Caucasian or Sino-Tibetan.

A feature of these languages is the absence of unity within "families". Thus Quechua, which was the language of the most highly developed empire at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, that of the Incas, contains a rather wide diversity of dialects. In this regard, a very typical case is that of the *Maya* group, within which twenty-eight dissimilar dialectic forms exist today.

The difference between Quiché (the language of the *Popol Vuh)* and another important dialect, Cakchiquel, for example, is as great as that between French and Russian, both of which are members of the Indo-European linguistic family.

In order to appreciate the substantial difference between the native languages of America and those of the so-called "Western" world, certain basic characteristics of the former must be pointed out. It is essential to make the distinction because it was the "Western" languages which entered into contact with the Amerindian languages, a contact marked by a conflict of cultures and a relationship of domination. In this connexion, the French specialist in Amerindian languages Bernard Pottier draws attention to "the existence of categories of thought manifested by grammatical modes to which we are not accustomed". This is an initial difference related to "the Vision of the World", that is to say "the connexions between kinds of experience lived and linguistic taxonomies".

Secondly, it is necessary to emphasize the essentially oral character of the Amerindian languages which have no alphabet. I say "essentially", because at least two of them—Maya and Nahuatl—had a method of transmission. This was based on a system of grooves and ideograms engraved on stone, wood, plaster, on jade or drawn in the codices manufactured from the bark of the *amate*. But writing did not exclude oral tradition since writing was exclusive to the priestly class in particular, as well as to an élite of nobles and rulers.

Of all these languages, the one which is most widely used today is Quechua, which is spoken by approximately 12,000,000 people (in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Northern Argentina, Southern Colombia). Next comes Guarani, spoken by 3,000,000 people (in Paraguay, several parts of Argentina and pockets in Brazil and Bolivia). About a million speak Maya (in Guatemala, Southern Mexico, Belize, a part of Honduras); Aymara (in Bolivia, Northern Chile and Southern Peru); Nahuatl (in Mexico and El Salvador). The present standing of these languages corresponds to the characteristics of a *general language* or a *lingua franca* which they possessed before the conquest and during the colonial period, i.e. vehicular languages in extensive areas of the continent.

This leads us to an examination of the consequences of the various contact situations which arose as a result of the European presence on the American continent. This presence interrupted a process of civilization by bringing two different systems of values into confrontation. It was a dramatic confrontation which, because of the technical superiority of the European, involved the imposition of the "Western" Christian model to the detriment of Amerindian cultural values and, at the same time, of the language of the conquistador. The conflict opposing two concepts of civilization was fundamentally an ideological confrontation. Specifically, it derived from the need to impose "an unquestionable truth"—the existence of one true god, that of the conquerors, and consequently the indispensable "destruction of idolatry", the death of the "false divinities" adored by the "infidels". This was the main pretext for the entire process of cultural substitution and economic exploitation of the colony.

Language naturally played an essential role in this confrontation, since it was the material in which the ideological content of the conditioning process was moulded. It was also the material in which resistance to that process was fashioned.

To the conquering language of Castile, whose imposition on the Iberian peninsula was completed in the very year in which America was discovered, was assigned the task of conditioning. Initially, it was the medium of evangelization, but it withdrew from this role when the superior efficacy of the vehicular Amerindian languages for teaching the "true faith" was realized. This victory of the judgment of the "theologians" over that of the "politicians" took place during the 16th century with the solid support of the Jesuits. This meant that the natives were conditioned in their own language but also that the colonial process strengthened the status of some languages, such as Guarani, which was standardized in the Missions, or developed the spread of others, like Quechua, whose use was greatly extended after the Conquest.

The most remarkable experiment affecting a native language was that performed by the Jesuits in the Guarani Reductions during a century and a half. This experiment consisted in using only Guarani for the production of Christian religious literature. This certainly helped to strengthen the position of the indigenous language (which, thanks to a process of generalized racial integra-

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The Lacandon Indians who live in the south of the Yucatan peninsula, between Mexico and Guatemala, were only "discovered" at the beginning of this century. Perhaps because of their geographical and cultural isolation they speak an extraordinarily pure form of the Maya language.

Entitled "The Parish Priest's Sermon", this illustration produced by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (1526-1613?) for his book **Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno** *bears witness to the evangelization which the Spanish Conquest imposed on the indigenous peoples of America. As must have been the case in sermons preached at that time, both Castilian and Quechua words are used in the manuscript, the text of which reads, "My children, I am going to preach to you the Gospel, the Holy Scriptures. You should not worship the idols of the sun. Your ancestors did so in the past, but you, my children, have received the sacrament of baptism."*

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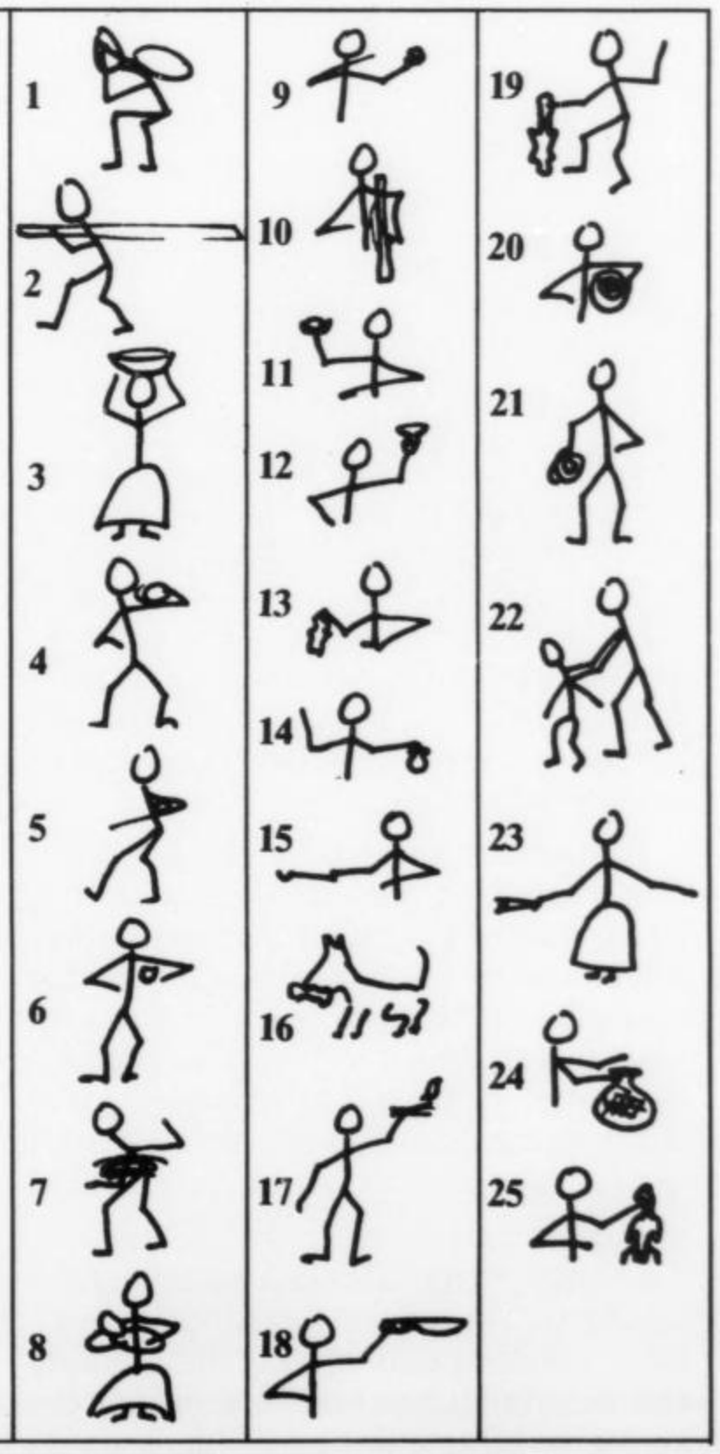
Whereas most Western languages employ circumlocutions to describe the many different ways of "carrying" an object, Tzeltal, the Maya language of Mexico, has 25 different terms to express these nuances.

1 — on the back **(cuch)**
2 — on the shoulders **(q'uech)**
3 — on the head **(pach)**
4 — on one shoulder **(cajnuc'tay)**
5 — under the arm **(lats')**
6 — in the pocket **(chup)**
7 — in a bundle **(tom)**
8 — in the arms **(pet)**
9 — on the hand **(nol)**
10 — across the shoulder **(jelup'in)**
11 — in the fist **(nop')**
12 — in a container **(lat')**
13 — by an edge of the object **(lip')**
14 — in a bag **(chuy)**
15 — in a spoon **(lup)**
16 — between the teeth **(cats')**
17 — above **(tuch)**
18 — in the air **(toy)**
19 — by letting it hang down **(lic)**
20 — a spiral object **(bal)**
21 — a rolled object **(ch'et)**
22 — by supporting with both hands **(chech)**
23 — with tweezers or tongs **(lut')**
24 — several objects together **(yom)**
25 — by the neck **(pich')**

(from **Who brought the Word,** The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Santa Ana, Calif., 1963).



tion, was already well established in the Province of Paraguay), but at the same time it drained Guarani of its own values which were essentially of a mystical-religious character.

Not a single example of this oral literature had been transcribed up to the first decade of this century, which proves that the "colonial process" continued after independence (1811). And this marginalization is even more serious since the exuberant speech of the Guaranis was the principal expression of their culture.

However, Guarani has survived in resemanticized, diglottic form until today as the generally spoken language of a national community, Paraguay. This is a unique case in America. 95 per cent of the population speak it, 45 per cent of the population are bilingual, 50 per cent are monolingual in Guarani and 5 per cent are monolingual in Spanish. Its use is not restricted to the regions of the interior. It has also invaded the cities. Nor is its use confined to certain classes of society, as happens with the native languages in other countries of the continent. But notwithstanding its general use, Guarani is only a "national" language—together with Spanish—as declared in Article 5 of the Constitution which, in the next line, consecrates Spanish as the "official" language.

Literacy programmes are not conducted in Guarani and it is not used as a medium of artistic expression. Thus the Paraguayan writer has accepted his condition of being a colonized writer since, despite the fact of knowing the native language, he does not write in it. The impulses of the popular will operate in Guarani, but social and cultural advancement are achieved through Spanish. These are signs which show that Guarani is the language of a dominated, albeit a majority group.

But what is happening to the other great indigenous language, Quechua, which is the most widely spoken on the continent? To compare it with the situation described above, that is to say in the context of a State, let us take the case of Peru. In May 1975, Quechua was declared by law to be an official language of that country on an equal footing with Spanish. The purpose of this was to strengthen the position of Quechua in the national community and to combat the social inferiority attached to the indigenous language and its speakers. At the present time, the linguistic position in Peru is as follows. Between six and eight million out of a total population of 16 million are bilingual in varying degrees, and about 1,600,000 are monolingual in Quechua. That is to say that approximately 50 per cent of the population are in a linguistic situation similar to that found in Paraguay. With one difference however—this half of the population is linguistically isolated from the other

half, doubtless through lack of communication, but also because those who speak Quechua are looked down upon.

The situation of Nahuatl, the other language which enjoyed great prestige and was widely used in pre-Columbian times, is even worse. Successive censuses reveal a progressive decline in the number of speakers, again largely because of the social opprobrium of which the language is victim. This is despite the admirable declarations of principle enshrined in "indigenista" policies which, judging by the results, are ineffectual and incoherent.

There exists another approach through which Amerindian cultures, or the encouragement of the languages, is extended or projected within the hybrid societies of America, and here I am speaking primarily of cultural hybridity. This is the approach which evokes or proposes an *image* of the Indian and of the components of his world. The first projection, called *indianismo*, is that portrayed in nineteenth-century Latin American romanticism. Alienated, stereotyped, idealized, it is nothing else than the image borrowed from the cliché of the "noble savage" which was a fashionable invention of European literature.

Towards the beginning of the present century, an entire change of focus took place, and the Indian portrayed in the pages of the *indigenista* novel symbolizes a denunciation of, and violent protest against, the exploitation of which he himself is a victim in Latin American society. This vision is compassionate, indignant and committed but it is outside the cultures it seeks to defend. Thus the *indigenistas* fall into an unconscious contradiction when they propose the integration of the Indian on terms of equality into national or "white" society. In doing so, they overlook cultural specificities, which involves an obvious risk of contributing to a loss of identity.

Towards the 1940s, the nature of writing underwent a change and the Latin American writer lost his complex of writing in an "imposed language". Overcoming the old tyranny of "correct" Spanish, he adopted a language in which local, everyday elements enriched the linguistic system—Castilian Spanish—in which he expressed himself. Much of this renewal is due to the fact that a number of writers *assumed* the profound values of indigenous cultures. True, they write in Spanish but knowing, as most of them do, the autochthonous languages on which in all cases these cultures are based, they employ resources and techniques borrowed from them which end by changing or giving a profoundly different colouring to what in literary terms remains the predominant idiom. ■

CONFIANT, Raphael and PRUDENT, Félix L.

Creole—language of the Caribbean

About 1615, French privateers gained a foothold on a Caribbean rock to which they gave the name of St. Christopher. At that time, the archipelago "belonged" to the Spanish crown, but the rival European powers decided to fight for a share of the spoils. Thus the first French to settle in the West Indies were men of the sea, of the sword, and of little faith. Stealing a few slaves from the Spaniards in the course of daring raids, they managed to come to terms with the Caribs who occupied the Windward Islands. There followed settlements in Guadeloupe and Martinique (1635), Saint-Lucia and Grenada (1650), Guiana (1660) and Tortuga which served as a bridgehead for the conquest of Santo Domingo (1697). In all these islands, a Creole language is still spoken which, despite some regional peculiarities, is of relatively homogeneous structure.

The term Creole, which has a variety of meanings in French, also varies considerably in meaning in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. Sometimes, it denotes the white descendant of the master, sometimes it denotes on the contrary the black element of African origin, on occasions it is used to denote the intermediate stages of ethnic cross-breeding. Nevertheless, a radical semantic frontier extends from the bayous of Louisiana to the border of Guiana.

Creole is always used in contrast to a word or series of words indicating a foreign, imported, immigrant element, introduced into the Community willingly or by force without taking root. Whether used adjectivally or as a noun, it constantly signifies a symbolical renaissance or final integration into a new ecosystem. The Creole languages, which too often, for the sake of convenience, are attached to a European trunk, are always treated as hybrids, mutants or breakaways which refuse to acknowledge their alleged origins.

Putting the question of the genesis of the Creole language in this way already amounts to participating in the endless discussion which is going on in this field. We find that Creole is linked with seventeenth century French colonization, that it spread very rapidly and that it came into being in order to meet the needs of a new kind of communication between unequal partners.

In fact, more careful analysis would reveal that negroes and whites must have collaborated closely in creating this new language and that before the arrival of large numbers of black slaves Creole was already the vernacular of all the inhabitants of the archipelago, irrespective of their ethnic origin. Discovery of the fabulous value of sugar for the plantation economies (1685) and the withdrawal of white contract workers thrust Creole into the negro communities from the beginning of the next century onwards, and it was only then that Creole would be referred to as a negro language. It should be noted that even now the *béké* (white West Indian settlers) still use Creole, which they have never abandoned completely.

We reject the dialect hypothesis (that Creole is derived from French) or the neo-African hypothesis (that Creole is a re-creation of a pre-existing African pidgin language) in favour of a mixed, hybrid—in a word, mulatto—origin of a system which admits a French source for eighty per cent of its vocabulary but certain aspects of whose morphology, syntax and rhetoric recall, in the opinion of other observers, West African patterns. The socio-linguistic function of Creole, more important than its genetic or typological classification, must be recognized. The language of a rural community cut off from the written word, official statements or great technological inventions, it provides a basic system of communication within relatively small communities which are strongly impregnated with customs and traditions which guarantee the survival of the existing social order.

After the 1804 revolution, Haiti provided a fertile soil for Creole. Having violently rejected both slavery and colonialism, the Haitians created a State that was both isolated and free of foreign tutelage, within which communications were difficult. With educational facilities that are ridiculously small in proportion to the population's theoretical needs and media reaching only a limited audience, the Republic of Haiti is basically a Creole-speaking nation. In the absence of exact language statistics, researchers generally agree that about 80 per cent of the population speak only Creole. Only the "élite", the privileged 5 per cent who live in Port-au-Prince and Pétionville and who benefitted from full-time school attendance can at present claim to know standard French.

The socio-linguistic situation is different in the Lesser Antilles and Guiana, which have remained French. Since the abolition of slavery (1848) and the campaigns for universal lay education (beginning of the twentieth century), French has gradually gained ground. The growing numbers of transistors, telephones and television sets, of newspapers and magazines, the large-scale post-war school attendance programmes and the considerable increase in the movement of persons bet-

Illustration © O.N.E., Port-Louis, Mauritius

Above, a Creole version of the famous maxim from George Orwell's **Animal Farm:** *"All animals are equal but some are more equal than others." The illustration is taken from an adaptation of Orwell's novel published in Mauritius under the title* **Repiblik Zanimo.**

ween the "home country" and the "Overseas Departments"—all these have contributed to an undeniable retreat of Creole in areas where it was the accepted medium of conversation. Creole is used less and less to discuss the price of vegetables or for story-telling in the countryside, and political and sports commentaries are increasingly given in French.

A similar phenomenon is taking place in the West Indies, especially Dominica and Saint Lucia, of which France lost control in the nineteenth century, but here it seems to be English which is hastening the decline of Creole and taking its place. Although in syntax and vocabulary they are very close to the languages of Guadeloupe and Martinique, the varieties of Creole spoken in the former British dominions are rapidly becoming anglicized.

This problematic co-existence of a popular, rural everyday language side by side with another, official, written, influential language has been studied by North American experts in socio-linguistics under the general description of *diglossia*. But more solidly founded investigations have recently invalidated the idea of a harmonious co-existence of two languages in our communities. The West Indians and the inhabitants of Guiana are not perfectly bilingual speakers who "choose" to express themselves either in Creole or in the standard language each time they have something to say.

On the contrary, a sort of third language is gradually taking form, a sort of mongrel Creole crossed with French or English, a system which is to all appearances extremely unstable but which is recruiting enthusiastic adherents in the field of the popular song, literature and the mass circulation press and quite simply in daily intercourse amongst all members of the community. This Frenchified Creole, or Creolized French has recently been baptized *interlecte*. According to some researchers into this phenomenon, Creole is merely continuing its "life-cycle", is re-pidginizing itself with a standard language because of the socio-economic changes which have taken place in recent years and should eventually become merged into a broad continuum with its mother tongue. In their view, Creole will gradually disappear as it is re-absorbed by the symbolic power of the standard language, mastery of which is a permanent aim for the underprivileged speakers of Creole.

The indigenous school of socio-

Photo © Vincent Van Gogh National Museum, Amsterdam

Aux Mangos, *an oil painting of a scene in Martinique executed by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) when he visited the island in 1887.*

linguistics, however, maintains that the death certificate of a language should not be issued with undue haste. True, when seen subjectively from a certain viewpoint in Guiana and the West Indies, Creole appears to be in poor shape. The rural dwelling, in which it was firmly rooted, has disappeared from our landscape, and the younger generation is strongly attracted by vocabulary coming from elsewhere, whether it be Parisian slang, Jamaican forms of speech, American negro songs or expressions from the campuses of foreign universities.

But amongst these young people Creole also has a stabilizing rôle. It is a factor of cultural identity and of contact with a history that is constantly being questioned. Young Caribbeans are discovering that, compared with the obvious advantages of French in school, at work, in international life, Creole provides a form of cultural protection. As a result, it is no longer appropriate to speak of Creole as a language that is despised and belittled by those who speak it. Opinion polls show that the younger population groups are strongly in favour of a standardization of the "patois" and want to see it taught in schools. Thus pessimism is no longer necessarily justified regarding the future of the language.

Apart from this change of attitude, there is a gradual increase in the output of artistic works in Creole adapted to the needs and tastes of the new market. These include records and cassettes not only of local origin but also from the North American and European diaspora, storybooks, collections of proverbs, works of history and philosophy, plays and films.

The last bastion of official resistance is collapsing. The governments concerned seem to be moving towards a recognition of the fact that Creole is the language of their citizens. In Haiti, thanks to a daring educational reform introduced in 1979, Creole is now the first language taught in primary schools.

Although they have not gone quite so far, the governments of Saint Lucia and Dominica are introducing arrangements which will contribute to a recognition of Creole as a fact of linguistic and cultural life. In Dominica, whose national motto is a phrase in Creole, a *Creole day* has been instituted. Cultural research groups are officially supported and radio programmes are broadcast both for those who speak only Creole and for those who wish to improve their knowledge of the language.

Things have been moving more slowly in Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique. There is no shortage of manpower and printed matter, but the authorities have been slow to act. However, the latest instructions concerning regional languages in France lead us to hope that reforms may now be introduced in teacher-training. Such reforms are essential for the progressive introduction of Creole into the educational system both as a working language and as a subject of study. ■

KEDROS, André

When Greek meets Greek

The Greek language has changed less in the course of time than many other ancient idioms. Modern Greek is much closer to the Greek of Plato than is Italian to the Latin of Cicero. A Greek high school pupil of today could just about read Xenophon's *Anabasis* or Plato's *Dialogues* without having recourse to a dictionary (this would not be true of Homer's writings). To do this, however, he would need a good command of "pure" Greek.

This is because modern Greek suffers from a dichotomy between *katharevusa*, or "pure" Greek, and *demotiki*, the popular language of the people. A similar dichotomy within a language is found in varying degrees in other regions, particularly in Arab-speaking countries. In Greece, this resulted in a "war of words" that has roused passions, at times been given an ideological colouring, and has still not been completely resolved.

Poor, the victims (even quite recently) of their history, unable to acquire an acceptable level of instruction from an inadequate educational system, the people of Greece have always spoken the so-called "popular" language, a flexible, expressive, living language, but one which, cut off from the mainstream and currents of thought that have enriched Western culture, has remained somewhat confined, as poor as the people who speak it.

The "pure" language, on the other hand, preserved by the Church and close to classical Greek, has retained the rich vocabulary and many of the subtleties of a language with a noble tradition; unfortunately, it is rigid and archaistic and the ordinary people understand very little of it.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, Cyril Lucaris, patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, wanted to have the gospels translated into Demotic Greek, but this initiative ended in tragedy. Denounced for "Protestantism" by his co-religionists, he was condemned to death by Sultan Murad IV and strangled by his Ottoman guards.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Greeks, with the help of some of the great powers of the day, finally freed a large part of their territory from the occupying Turks. The poet Dionysios Solomos helped to rouse national feeling with inflammatory poems such as his masterpiece *The Freed Besieged* which, since he was addressing the freedom fighters and the Greek people as a whole, were written in the popular language. Some of the freedom fighters' leaders, men of humble origin such as Makriyannis, also left behind them remarkable memoirs in *demotiki*.

With independence scarcely achieved, social divisions quickly re-surfaced in the new Greek State. The conservatism of the Church, which had had a positive influence during the long years of Turkish occupation, found an echo in the conservatism of the privileged classes, the big landowners and the bourgeoisie who had taken over the reins of power. This conservatism, which made its influence felt in schools, the judiciary, indeed, throughout the administration, extended even to the language question and as a result *katharevusa*, the "pure" language, was adopted by the entire apparatus of State.

The question of the two languages thus took on a new dimension. The official adoption of *katharevusa* had the effect of keeping the common people in a clear situation of inferiority. It severely limited their access to secondary and higher education, made them dependent on "literate" intermediaries in their dealings with the administration and the law courts, and encouraged political patronage. The example of Dionysios Solomos was forgotten, and the literature of the period, as well, of course, as the newspapers and magazines were all written in the "pure" language.

In 1888, the Greek writer Jean Psichari attempted another breakthrough by publishing his novel *My Journey* in *demotiki*. The book was greeted with howls of protest and was to become a landmark in the "language war". The objections to it were in large part ideologically based, but it is true that Psichari, a man of upper middle class origin, seldom used *demotiki* himself and in writing his book drew largely on the rather stilted, artificial language of folklore. Thus his courageous initiative was open to criticism and, although he was to influence the poets and writers of the end of the century such as Kostas Palamas and Kosmas Politis they were careful to avoid his radical approach.

The language problem soon developed into a major political issue. The left wing parties included the introduction of *demotiki* in schools and the administration among their demands for social reform and made a point of using it in their own

newspapers and publications. The quarrel reached such a pitch that, in the 1920s, any fervent protagonist of *demotiki* was automatically considered to be a political extremist.

Gradually, however, even the most confirmed conservatives began to realize that, in an ever more rapidly changing world, the use of *katharevusa* was isolating them more and more from the ordinary people over whom they were thus losing their control. General Metaxas, who in 1936 established a nazi-style regime in Greece, switched to using *demotiki*. And it is significant that it was a fairly conservative government that, in 1976, issued the decree introducing the use of the popular language in the schools.

A number of problems remain, however. The *demotiki* used in the schools was found in practice to be rather too imprecise and only by making rather arbitrary borrowings from *katharevusa* could it be made suitable for the teaching of technology and the sciences. Soon voices were calling "a plague on both your houses", charging the defenders of *demotiki* with sectarianism and denouncing the diehard protagonists of *katharevusa* as élitists.

A language cannot be developed by decree. It is a living thing which can be modified only at the pace of its own internal rythms and which enriches itself by taking what it needs from wherever it finds it. *Demotiki*, a living, popular language, is lucky enough to be able to draw on the wellsprings of an Attic language which, though stiff and pedantic in its present form, has reached across the centuries to provide the Western world with many of the terms

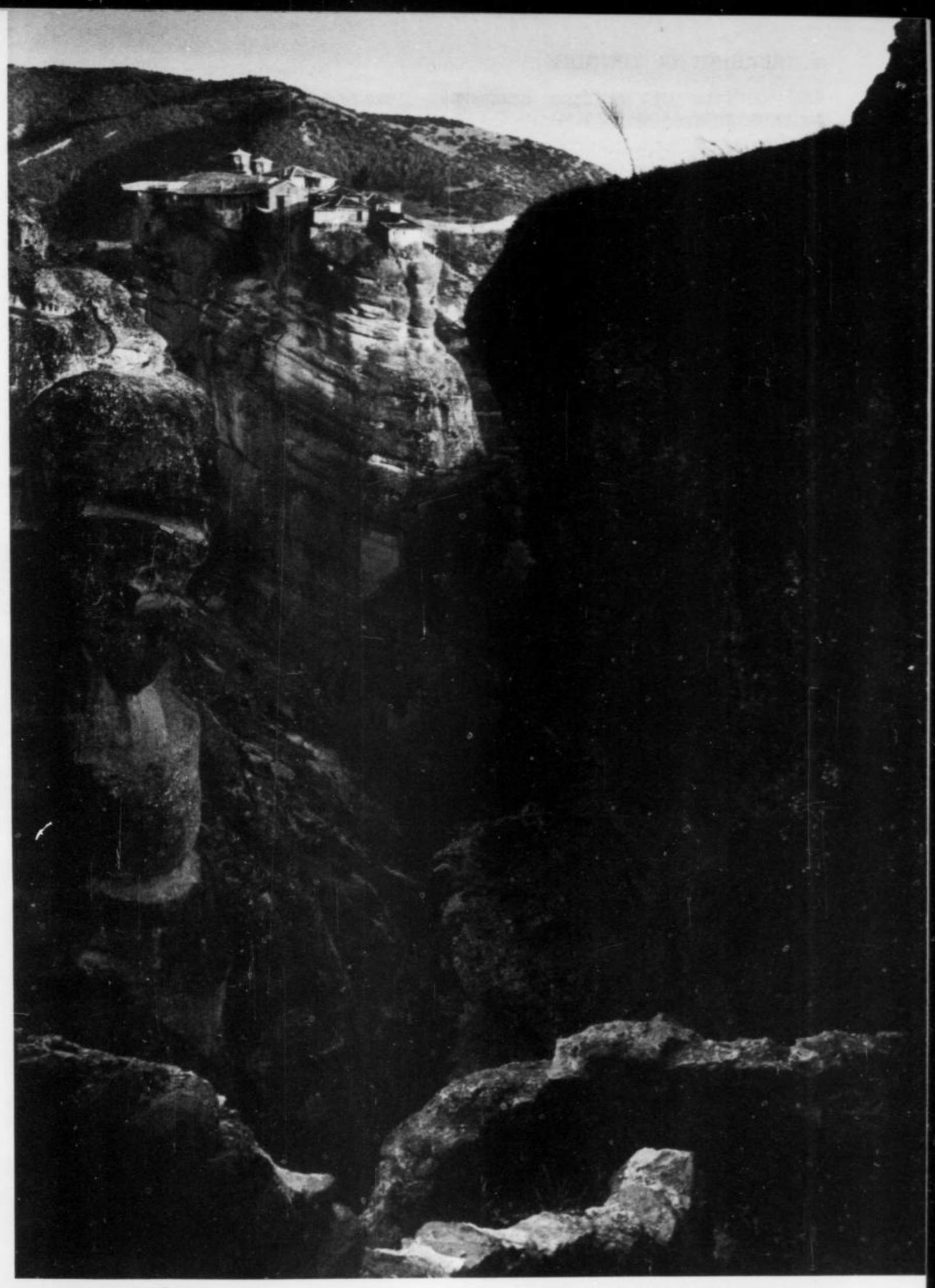


Photo David Seymour © Magnum, Paris

Photo Takonis © Magnum, Paris

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and during the four centuries of Ottoman occupation that ensued, Greece declined into a dark age. Greek national spirit, however, remained undimmed and showed itself in a series of revolts and uprisings which culminated in the War of Independence (1821-1828) and the liberation of the country. Preserved largely by the Church, the Greek language throughout this period was the buttress of the national conscience. Above, one of the Greek Orthodox Meteora monasteries in Thessaly.

Preserved by the Church and a literate élite, **katharevusa,** ***or "pure" Greek, remains close to the Greek of Plato. Ordinary Greeks speak*** **demotiki,** ***the popular language of everyday life. Left, Greek peasant women sifting flour.***

and concepts its sciences and new technologies require.

A language evolves slowly, and the great Greek poets of modern times have instinctively contributed to the process of enrichment—men such as George Seferis and Odysseus Elitis (Nobel Prizewinners in 1963 and 1979 respectively), or Constantine Cavafy, Angelos Sikelianos and Yannis Ritsos who, like other great poets from small countries, have succeeded in capturing an international audience. Successes such as these would be impossible without a rich and expressive language base, and these poets have called upon all the resources of the sappy vitality of *demotiki*, subtly enriched by borrowings from *katharevusa*.

Today, not only literature but also the language of the school and even of government can be seen to have assimilated the lesson taught by these poets. In a not too distant future this evolution will reach its fulfilment and then there will no longer be a "language war" in Greece. The Greek people will speak, read and write a single language—Modern Greek. ■

MIRON, Gaston

'The first one'

Memories come rushing back to me pell-mell, memories that for twenty years have played upon my feelings and my inner consciousness. From the time that I became aware of the outer world I was steeped in a linguistic environment which was preponderantly English and bilingual, French being reserved for use in the home. The end result of this overlapping of two languages, or, to be more precise, of one language over another, was to produce an undifferentiated web in which words went in two's, pairings which came through to me as a single signal. Door/porte, pull/tirer, pont/bridge, meat/viande, lundi/Monday, péage/toll, men/hommes, address/adresse, merci/thank you, bienvenue/welcome. Posters, advertisements, signs were all around me. This, I thought, is how the world is.

This was also how it was in Montreal when I arrived there in 1947, and, indeed, how it was throughout the Province. In the street (the Rue Principale, the Rue Saint-Vincent, the Rue Tour-du-Lac) I used to hear English spoken more often than not and see French Canadians—the shopkeepers, the workmen—all deferentially getting by as best they could in this language.

Some of them were proud to do this; others, I felt, were less so. Already I could hear all around me what I had heard over twenty years wherever I had lived or travelled: "So-and-so gets by very well in English"; "Look at old So-and-so, he's got a good job, he speaks English"; "He's educated, he knows English", or its variant, "He's a cultivated man, he speaks English"; "He's completely bilingual", and so on.

Later, in Montreal, I was on several occasions to hear something which went much further: "I speak English so well that when I am with the English (English-speaking Canadians) they can't tell that I am French Canadian", or words to that effect. When, at the age of twenty-five, I began to ponder the significance of these remarks, I found it abnormal that the notion of being educated or cultured should be assimilated to the fact of knowing someone else's language. But to pass oneself off as someone else, to be ashamed of oneself, seemed to me to be the dregs of the dregs.

Amongst my relatives, more than in my immediate family, English was looked upon with some favour. Yet everyone was scandalized when one of my uncles changed camp and went over completely to English; of my two cousins, only one still knows a little French.

My father, on the other hand, was a man of principle and was insistent that we should give up neither our language nor our faith. But he was a victim of circumstance and his own situation. He was a carpentry contractor and a high percentage of his customers were English. Yet he spoke English only with great difficulty. One day I was present during a particularly halting discussion with a rich customer. After she had left, he said to me: "You, at any rate, are going to learn English." At eight years old, that had a powerful effect on me.

My father often took me with him to his work-sites and on visits to the regions of Archambault, Saint-Faustin and Lapini, which seemed to me to be the end of the world. Everywhere we went, whenever the question of work or of the children's future came up, we were urged to learn English; and those for whom it was too late expressed their regrets at not having learnt it as though to encourage us to do so. No doubt about it, this language was *the first one*. ■

Text extracted from *Maintenant* magazine, Montreal, no. 134, March 1974.

Poster A. Walasa. All rights reserved

Bilingual poster announcing a conference in Montreal, Canada.

Bonjour Québec

For two centuries after the Treaty of Paris (1763) which brought to an end Anglo-French contention for the possession of New France, English was the language of business and economic power in Quebec. The language clash that this situation gave rise to bore witness to the struggle of a people against assimilation. Cut off from its French roots, the language of Quebec was obliged to evolve outside the mainstream of the French language and to affirm its own specificity.

The industrial expansion of the beginning of the twentieth century threatened to result in the "anglicization" of the lower-paid workers, and in 1902, the Association for the Use of French in Canada was established whose aim was to encourage the study, improvement and protection of Canadian French. Nevertheless, up to 1960, the language question seems to have been limited to literary squabbles and nationalistic rhetoric.

The popular spoken language, *Joual,* has given rise to a great deal of controversy. No one seems able to agree on a precise definition of *Joual;* does it include the entire vocabulary of Quebec French, or does it cover only a Montreal dialect full of anglicisms? Is it a new language, a patois, or simply a certain level of a language? Each linguist and commentator adopts a different viewpoint and the debate widens, since the linguistic question is only one aspect of a wider social problem.

From the linguistic point of view, the peculiarities of Quebec French are not a matter of vocabulary, syntax or morphology, but rather of phonetics. Apart from a certain number of anglicisms, which vary from region to region, the vocabulary is marked chiefly by the use of archaic words or expressions that can still be traced back to certain regions of France. To these must be added words that had to be invented to describe the realities of a new land: *bancs de neige* (snow banks), *poudrerie* (blizzard), *érablière* (maple grove), *orignal* (moose). The syntax borrows some English or American constructions, yet without straying from the French sentence form. Crammed with abbreviations, the morphology is often elliptic and at times abrupt, syncopated.

The Quebec accent, however, like the accents of Marseille or Belgium, is immediately recognizable. It is a matter of a tone and a rhythm which, combined with nasalization, diphthongization and the displacement of the tonic accent, demand a certain period of adaptation for an untutored ear. Once the listener has become accustomed to these peculiarities, he soon realizes that Quebec speech is neither a dialect nor a patois; even less is it an autonomous language distinct from French.

Joual has had a striking impact in the literary field. The people of Quebec have long been asking themselves whether they have a literature that can be considered distinct from French literature. Their writers have wavered between universalism (respect for the beauty of mainstream French) and regionalism (giving rein to exoticism and the picturesque). They were aware of the gap that existed between the written and the spoken language in Quebec.

This debate was necessary to clarify the issues about a language under pressure. The people of Quebec can now set about trying to define a French language which is specifically North American; not a new but a different language which is developing within the environment in which it is employed.

Language, which is a form of cultural and political expression, remains a matter of discussion. The number of dictionaries and indexes which attempt to capture its specificity, the multiplicity of opinions, the inquiries aimed at establishing a better assessment of its representativeness are all evidence of a permanent, continuing questioning.

Two important Commissions were set up: the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1970), which resulted in the recognition of the equality of English and French regarding their use in all Federal offices and institutions throughout Canada, and a Commission of Inquiry, on the status of the French language and language rights in Quebec, whose multidisciplinary studies have opened up new horizons.

Established in 1961, the Office of the French Language is responsible for watching over the enrichment and correct use of the spoken and written language and acts as an arbiter on the usage of technical terminology. The purpose of the Charter of the French Language, which was adopted in 1977 and was the outcome of a lengthy period of discussion, is to guarantee the French-speaking people of Quebec certain fundamental language rights and to make French the normal and customary language of work, communications, trade and commerce, both of the administration and the business world.

Adapted from the *Guide Culturel du Québec,* edited by Lise Gauvin and Laurent Mailhot, Montréal, Boréal Expresse, 1982

The Aka Pygmies are nomadic hunter gatherers who live in the forests of the Central African Republic and the Congo. They speak* aka, *a form of Bantu which is different from that spoken by the non-Pygmy peoples of this part of Africa. Right, the cover of the first section of the* Dictionnaire Ethnographique Aka-Français *(1981), which forms part of volume II of a four-volume* Encyclopédie des Pygmées Aka *now being published by the French Society of Linguistic and Anthropological Studies.

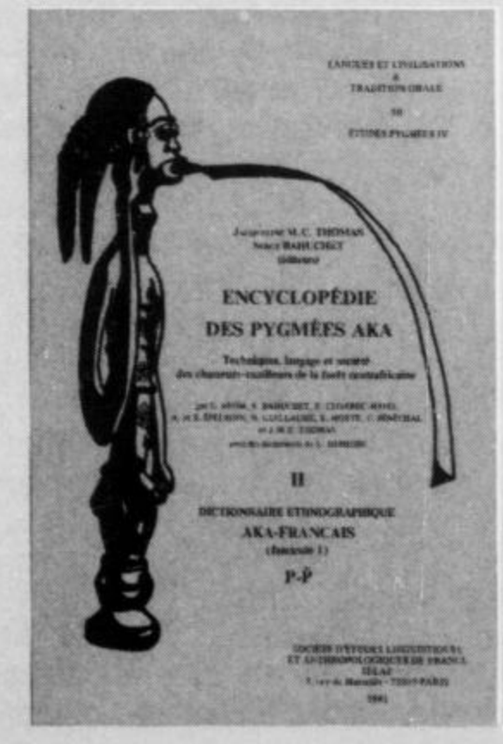


Photo © SELAF, Paris

PATTANAYAK, Debiprasanna

India, a multilingual sub-continent

According to the 1961 Census, there are 1,652 mother tongues in India. These mother tongues are identity tokens, but not necessarily languages. Depending on how one counts, there are between 400 and 700 languages in India. There are thirteen major modern languages listed in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution besides Sanskrit, and English, which is the associate official language of the Republic.

These thirteen languages have a history of at least one thousand years, Tamil claiming antiquity as old as Sanskrit or even older. Each of them, excepting Sindhi, Urdu, Sanskrit and Hindi, is a dominant language in a State. Sindhi is a non-State language spread over different parts of the country. Urdu is the official language of Jammu and Kashmir States and yet is spoken in almost all States of India. Hindi is spoken in six States and Union Territories as the mother tongue and culture language and is spoken by the largest number of people as their second language. Sanskrit has been the mother language of all languages of India irrespective of family affiliation. All these languages have their dialects, styles and registers adding further complexity to the scene.

The languages of India belong to four language families, Indo-European, Dravidian, Austric (a language grouping that

includes the Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian language families) and Sino-Tibetan. There are a large number of languages yet to be classified and scholars have suggested a fifth family. However, both the influence of Sanskrit and the cultural miscegenation of the last 3,000 years has made India a single language, linguistic, socio-linguistic and semantic area.

There are eight major script systems and a host of minor ones in India. It is interesting that while the languages of India belong to four or five language families, all scripts except Roman and Arabic belong to one script family. The Indian language alphabet systems borrowed from Sanskrit are among the most phonetic scripts in the world. Sanskrit was permitted to be written in different scripts in different parts of the country. This to a certain extent explains the influence Sanskrit exercised over different Indian languages. In the new awareness about literacy teaching, enthusiasts and sectarians have been proposing new scripts and expanding existing scripts. But the general tendency among non-literate languages acquiring literacy is to adopt the script of the dominant language of the region of their location. Even now languages like Santhali and Konkani are written in five and four scripts respectively. As one language is written in many scripts, many languages are also written using Devanagari.

A close look at the demography of the country makes it amply clear that not only the Republic as a whole, but each constituent part of it is multilingual. Three distinct linguistic profiles are discerned even from a cursory look. There are States where the dominant language is spoken by between 85-95 per cent of the population. There is a different group of States where the dominant language is spoken by between 45 and 65 per cent of the population. The third group consists of regions comprising States and Union Territories where no language is spoken by over 20 per cent of the population. Each one poses a different set of educational and cultural problems.

India's tribal population constitutes 7 per cent of its population. Although many of the tribal languages have died or surrendered their identity to other major Indian languages, a vast number still persists. Except in the north-east of India tribal languages are nowhere in the majority. Even in north-east India, although tribal languages are in the majority because of the existence of a large number of small ethno-linguistic groups, there is no cohesiveness among them. As a result English has been adopted as the State language in some of these States.

Hindi is the official language and English is the associate official language of the Republic. However, Hindi has not been able to resolve the internal contradiction between language and dialects and the external contradiction arising out of binary juxtaposition of Hindi with English on the one hand and Hindi and other regional languages on the other. In spite of all promotional efforts, Hindi in the popular mind is neither the language of authority nor of convenience. Yet it is *de facto* the *lingua franca* of the country.

English is spoken by approximately 2 per cent of the population. This population though small in percentage is larger in size than that of Australia. There is a small group of Anglo-Indians whose mother tongue is English. They have been granted special constitutional protection. English continues to be the language of intellection, commerce and above all is the key to jobs guaranteeing rank, status and wealth in society. English education has created an élite class and has created a gap between the élite and the masses. Whether in education, administration or mass communication, English dominates the field. There is a growing demand for a reallocation of domains of usage between English and the newly emerging regional languages. In the process, English is also set against the Indian languages and an artificial conflict of interest is created.

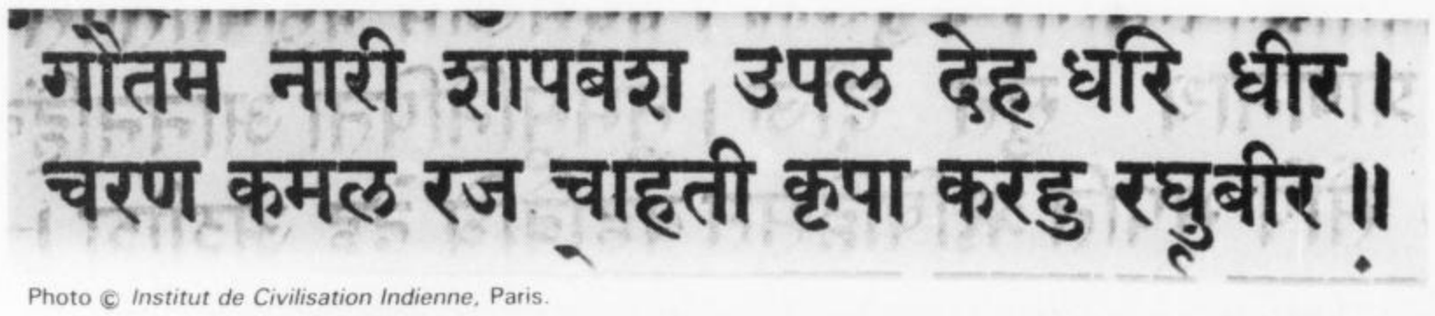


Photo © *Institut de Civilisation Indienne*, Paris.

The* Ramayana**, *one of the great epic poems of India, was originally written in Sanskrit by the poet Valmiki, about 300 BC. Above, an extract from the Hindi version, known as the* Ramcaritmanas *(Sacred Lake of the Acts of Rama), written in the 16th century by the poet Tulsidas and considered to be the greatest achievement of medieval Hindi literature.

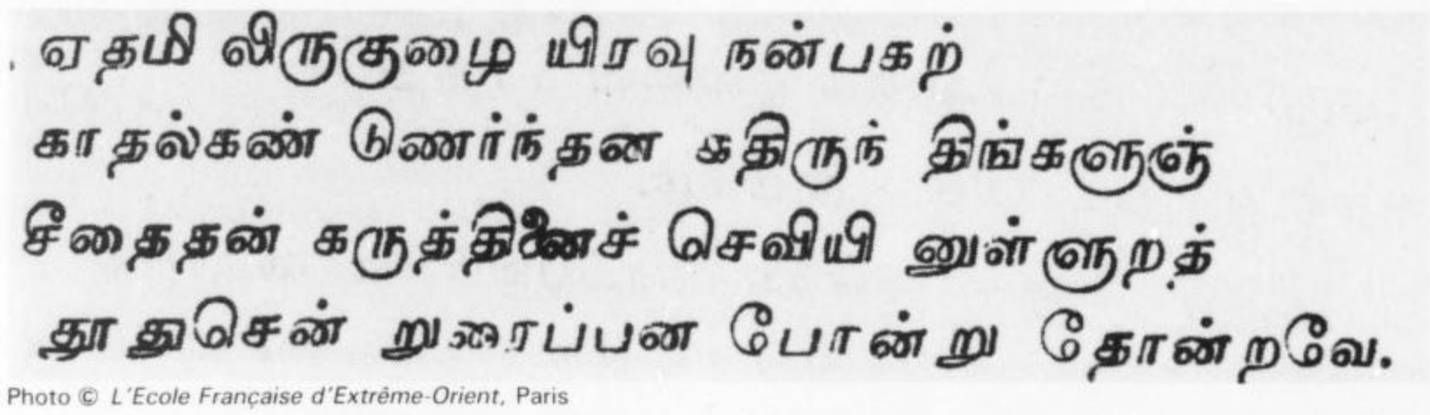
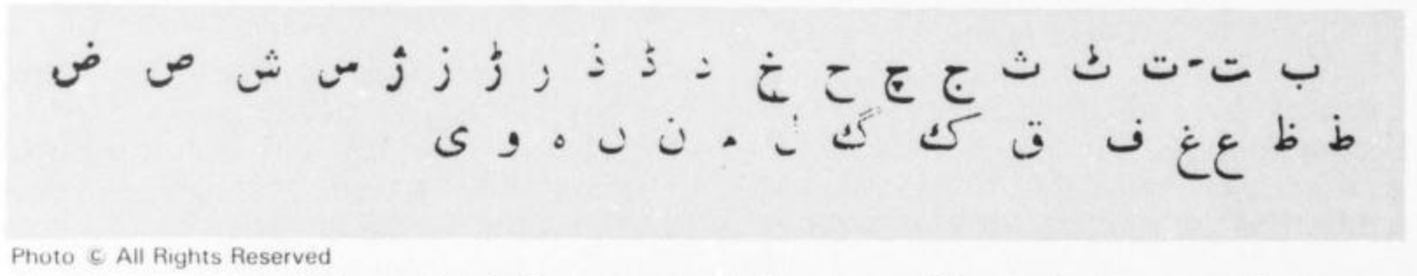


Photo © *L'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris

This extract from the Tamil version of the* Ramayana**, *written by the 12th-century Indian Tamil poet Kampan and known as the* **Iramavataram** *(Rama's Incarnation), speaks of Rama's love for Sita his wife-to-be.



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Urdu, which belongs to the Indic group of the Indo-European languages, is spoken by some 26 million people in India and Pakistan. Although structurally and historically spoken Urdu and Hindi derive from the same base, the literary forms of the two languages have separated due to the influence of Sanskrit on Hindi and of Persian and Arabic on Urdu. Urdu is written from right to left. The alphabet, above, is in Arabic script with Persian additions and extra letters to indicate sounds specific to Urdu.

India is one of the rare countries that have given a constitutional guarantee of primary education through the mother tongue. But this provision is respected more in the breach than in the observance. Only 58 languages are used as school languages. The structure of the education system is such that the higher one goes in the ladder, the greater is the demand for a lesser number of languages. This militates against the grass-root multilingualism in the country.

The policy of the Indian Government, generally known as the "three language formula", is a consensus born out of pragmatism. This three language formula is a strategy and not a goal. It leaves open the possibility of learning more than the three required languages, the regional State language, and the two official national languages, Hindi and English. Thus, anyone who has a mother tongue other than one of these three and who wishes to pursue its study at school, or anyone who wishes to study classical languages, such as Sanskrit or Arabic, has to study four or five languages.

Many, oriented in the dominant monolingual culture, consider multilingualism a burden and even go to the extent of dubbing it the disease of the poor. In developed countries of the world, where dominant monolingualism is the practice, systematic efforts to annihilate minority languages and cultures have not only resulted in cultural impoverishment but also a backlash of revolt by small groups.

The Western mind, operating with a linear and binary logic, sees opposition between English and Hindi, English and other Indian languages, Hindi and Urdu, Hindi and other Indian languages, dominant and minority languages. The Indian intellectuals trained in the ways of the West also perceive their reality in the above manner. This runs counter to the inclusive spirit of Indian logic which finds a specific role for each of the elements in a multi-cultural set up. Thus speaking one language at home and another outside, one language to communicate with the neighbouring State and another for intercommunication in the Union, one or more languages for international communication does not pose any conflict in the common man's logic. This is one of the reasons for the growing estrangement between the masses and the élite alienated from its own roots.

Many languages militate against the approach of mass media in the same way as small land holdings militate against super farm technology. The reluctance to use many mother tongues in education is linked with the reluctance to share power and economic resources with the people. A multiplicity of languages, by drawing attention to many small groups, demands a more human approach to economic planning. Thus more languages are a greater defence of democracy. Therefore many see in it a threat and inconvenience to the centralized State.

The Indian experiment must succeed if an interdependent international order is to be built on the sound principles of mutual respect and understanding. As in other parts of the Third World, Indian multilingualism and pluriculturalism are under constant threat from those who seek, both in theory and in practice, to impose mono-models. Thus while the Republic remains multilingual, subtle efforts are made to create pressures to make the States dominant monolingual regions. This is bound to fail. Multilingualism and pluriculturalism dictate alternate modes of thinking and alternate strategies of development. If human ingenuity fails to rise to this challenge, then not only India and the Third World, but all mankind will have to face chaos and destruction. ■

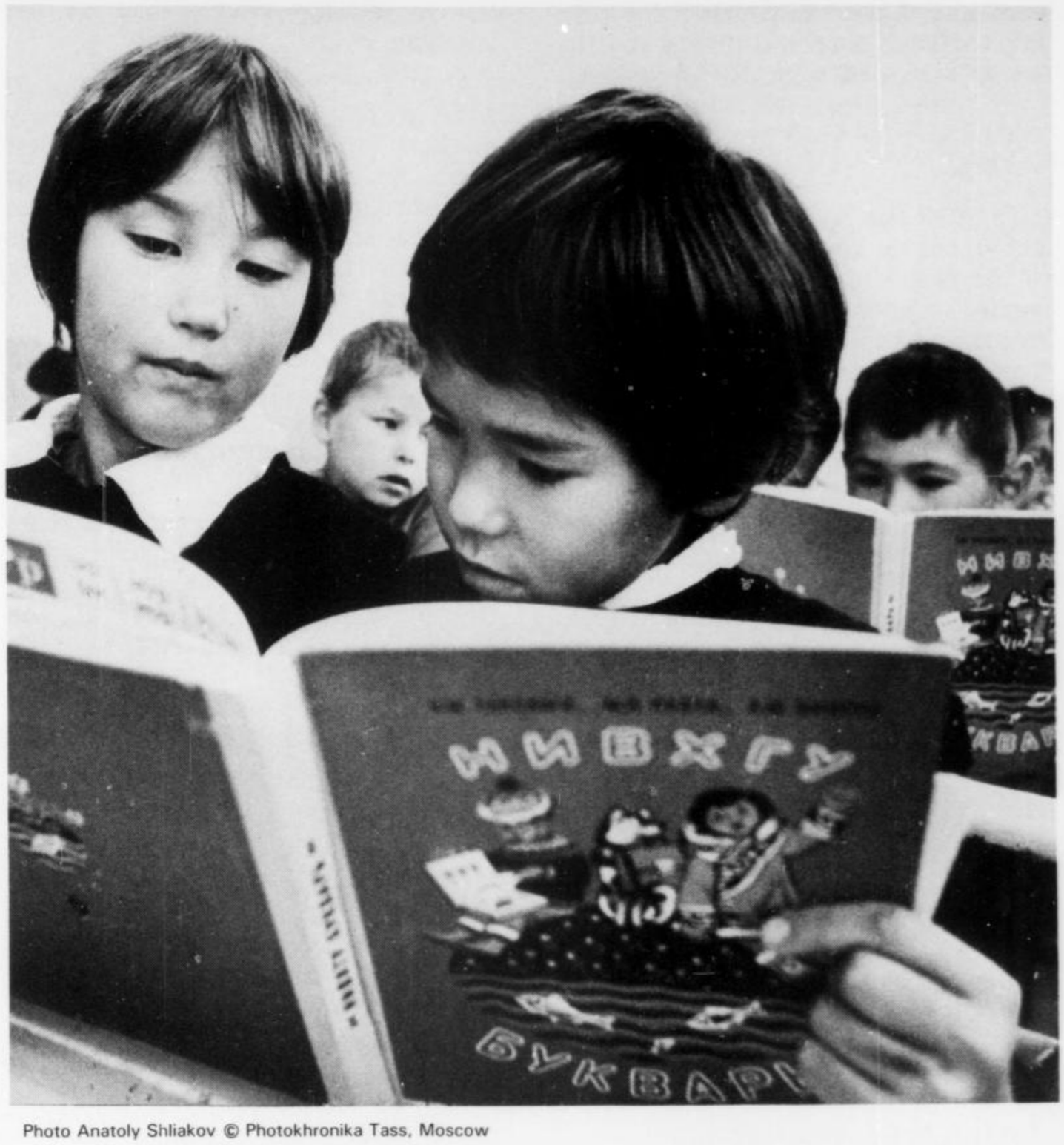


Photo Anatoly Shliakov © Photokhronika Tass, Moscow

Nivkh children study a reading primer in their own language. The Nivkh language is spoken by some 4,000 people on the island of Sakhalin and along the estuary of the river Amur. The first Nivkh primer, using a modified Cyrillic alphabet, was published by author Vladimir Sanghi, himself of Nivkh origin, and G. Otaina in 1981.

SANGHI, Vladimir Mikhailovich

The story of an alphabet

It was the second spring of the war in the old Nivkh village of Chaivo. Old Mamzin, the oldest member of our Nivkh people which was dying out, was afraid that he would suddenly go away to Mly-vo, the land of the departed. And so he decided to initiate me, a whippersnapper of seven years of age, into the ways of men, hunting at sea. But before I was judged fit to step into the boat with the tough, unsmiling hunters, I had to take part several times in the feeding ceremony of the *yzgns*, the guardian spirits of the places where we were to hunt.

From a canvas bag the old man took a pinch of tea, a pinch of tobacco, some dried lily bulbs and a small piece of sugar. Addressing the mysterious *yzgn*, he said, "Here we are! We have come to see you. We are poor and have nothing." Unable to take my eyes off his hand, swallowing my saliva, I listened to the old man with one ear. It was a long time since we had had sugar on our table. "We would have liked to give you more," old Mamzin went on, "but there isn't any. Have pity on us. Make everything go well for us. Amen!" And with a sweeping gesture he cast the offerings beneath a thick bush of twisted alder or low cedar.

On the rare sunny days, when wind and tide bore ice-floes towards the shore, the old men sailed out to sea in boats hewn out of poplar trunks. On the shore, I controlled myself as best I could; neither running about nor acting childishly in case the lord of the sea might think that my pranks were the result of too easy a life and would refuse to provide the hunters with a quarry.

In the evening after a real feast, with a good reassuring fire crackling away, the old men would recount the marvellous myths and legends of the Nivkh, while I who was lucky enough to hear them dreamed of the day when I would be able to write so that I could record these stories for the enjoyment of hundreds and thousands of other children.

In byegone days the Nivkh had their own form of writing, but later they lost it. Legend has it that the guilty one was a Nivkh who had been made responsible for guarding the written signs. The man did not look after the document properly, and it was drenched with rain. When good weather returned, the

man spread out the pages in the sun. But the wind rose and blew away the leaves inscribed with Nivkh writing. Ever since then, according to the legend, the Nivkh have lived without writing.

In 1930 the Soviet State created in Leningrad an Institute of the Peoples of the North for the education of the twenty-six peoples who lived in the vast Arctic and sub-Arctic lands stretching from the Kola peninsula in the west to Chukotka, Kamchatka and northern Sakhalin in the east. These peoples are bound by a common historical destiny and identical natural and economic conditions (they practise reindeer raising, dog rearing, hunting, and live from sea mammal and fishing industries). They had no writing of their own.

left to develop Nivkh as a written language.

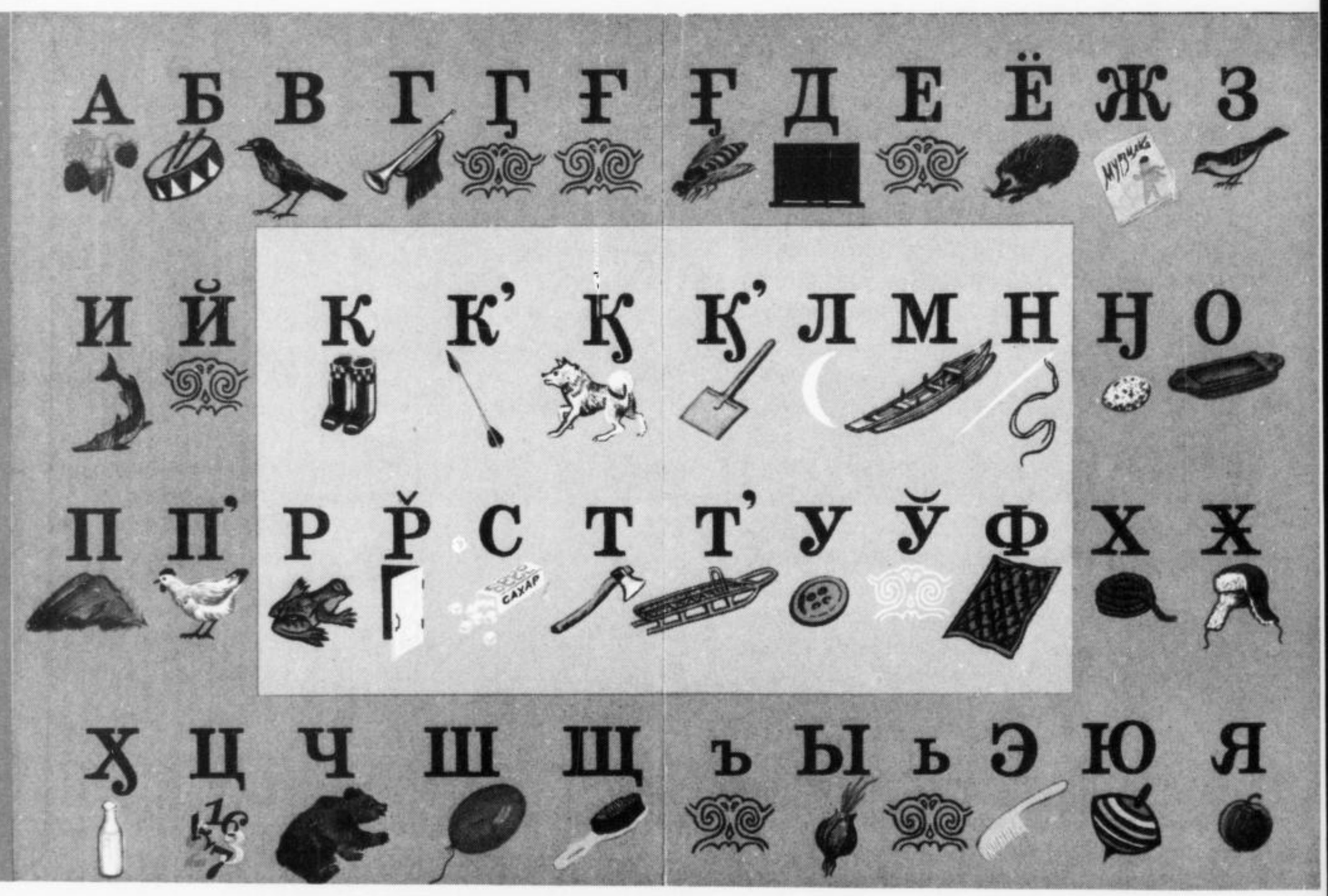
Over twenty years ago I began to write my first poems and stories in my mother tongue. However my first book, *Nivkh Legends* (1961) was published in Russian translation. When it appeared, Constantin A. Fedin, the great Soviet writer in Russian, wrote me a letter in which he said: "So a Nivkh writer, a poet of the Nivkhs, has arisen, and it is up to him to reveal to all other peoples the heart and soul of his own." Such words have a binding force, and I continued to write poetry and prose.

I was glad that I had spent three years studying written Nivkh in Leningrad, at the preparatory section of the Herzen Institute's Faculty of the Peoples of the North. Actually, the

In June 1979 an important event took place in the life of my people: a new, more accurate and more complete Nivkh alphabet was adopted. Each sound of the Nivkh language is now noted according to principles which have been organized in a coherent system.

But it is one thing to create an alphabet; it is another to introduce a people to reading. And so, with the Nivkh specialist Galina A. Otaina, I began to write a primer and a teaching course in the basics of Nivkh writing. The course was published in 1980 and the primer in 1981. Now Nivkh children can learn their language with textbooks.

Adults and children of school age can thus learn their own language. But what about the toddlers? Now we had



It took Vladimir Sanghi five years to perfect the Nivkh alphabet, right. It is based on the 33-letter Russian Cyrillic alphabet with additional letters to accommodate sounds in the Nivkh language which have no equivalent in Russian.

Photo © Educational Publishers, Leningrad

Russian scholars helped the Chukches, the Evenki, the Nentsy, the Eskimos, the Khantes and other peoples of the North to develop their own forms of writing. The first Eskimo primer, which appeared in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1930s, is still used today in Eskimo schools in North America.

Latin characters were initially used for the alphabets of the peoples of the North. Then, shortly before World War II, at the request of the peoples themselves, work began on transcribing them into Cyrillic characters. But war broke out before the work could be completed.

The war ended in victory, but the Nivkhs who had studied at the Institute of the Peoples of the North did not return from the battlefield. No one was

notation system used there was terribly ponderous and far from perfect. There are over forty sounds in Nivkh whereas the Russian alphabet has only thirty-three letters. Consequently two and sometimes three letters which were often fundamentally incompatible had to be used to denote those sounds of the Nivkh language which have no equivalent in Russian. It was a very clumsy transcription to handle and was, in fact, only used in the Institute. It had not spread to the Nivkh people.

As an adult and the author of several books, I set myself the goal of creating a Nivkh alphabet as comprehensive as those of the other peoples of our multilingual country and of bringing writing to our people. It took about five years to create a new alphabet.

to create a course and a method for teaching pre-school-age children their mother tongue. This is a very special kind of work which called for a great deal of time and energy; but now it is finished, and in autumn 1982 it was approved at Sakhalin. The task which remains is to produce a series of textbooks like those which have been used for over ten years by many other northern peoples. In addition to a language textbook, the series will consist of a bilingual dictionary, a manual for teachers, a reader in the vernacular language, and an anthology of work by national writers as well as translations of the great classics of Russian, Soviet and world literature. I am currently preparing translations into Nivkh of stories by Pushkin and Andersen as well as Tolstoy's tales for children.

The existence of Nivkh as a written language opens up to my people the fabulous treasures of a time-honoured popular oral tradition and gives them access to world culture in their own language. I have sometimes heard it said that the language of a people which has very recently emerged from a patriarchal state is bound to be incapable of expressing the feelings of our contemporaries and the complexities of their vision of society and the world. I do not think this is so. A real writer can use any language to describe the present-day life of his people in all its complexity.

One remarkable result of the creation of a written Nivkh language has been that many gifted Nivkhs are now turning to creative writing. Young Nivkhs are also being drawn to the study of literature, and several of them are currently students at higher education institutions in Leningrad and Moscow. Nivkhs who have won doctorates will soon hold teaching posts at institutes of education at Leningrad and Juzno-Sachalinsk. The teaching of Nivkh is also being introduced into colleges of education.

After the Nivkhs (4,400 persons), the Saami (1,900), the Koriaks (7,500) and the Dolgans (4,900) have begun to transcribe their languages and have already published their first readers. The Evens (12,000) and the Mansi (7,700) are working along the same lines.

The modern world has no right to neglect any language, whoever it may belong to and whatever the level of its development. The neglect and disappearance of a non-written language constitute a loss for human culture as a whole.

The Soviet author Chingiz Aitmatov is right when he says, "Everyone should have his point of junction with the earth." The homeland is the spiritual culture of all our brother peoples, but its starting point is your *yurt*[1], your *yaranga*[2], your *aoul*[3], the river of your childhood. It is there that a man's personality is formed. When the Kirghiz writer Aitmatov wrote his story called "Pied dog running by the waterside", I believe that he understood and felt this Nivkh tale from within because, although he thinks on a planetary scale, he is still deeply attached to Cheker, the *kichlak*[4], where he was born, beside the rushing waters of the Kurkureou. ■

[1]Yurt: A light, circular movable tent consisting of skins or felt stretched over a lattice framework, used by the Kirghiz and other Central Asian peoples.

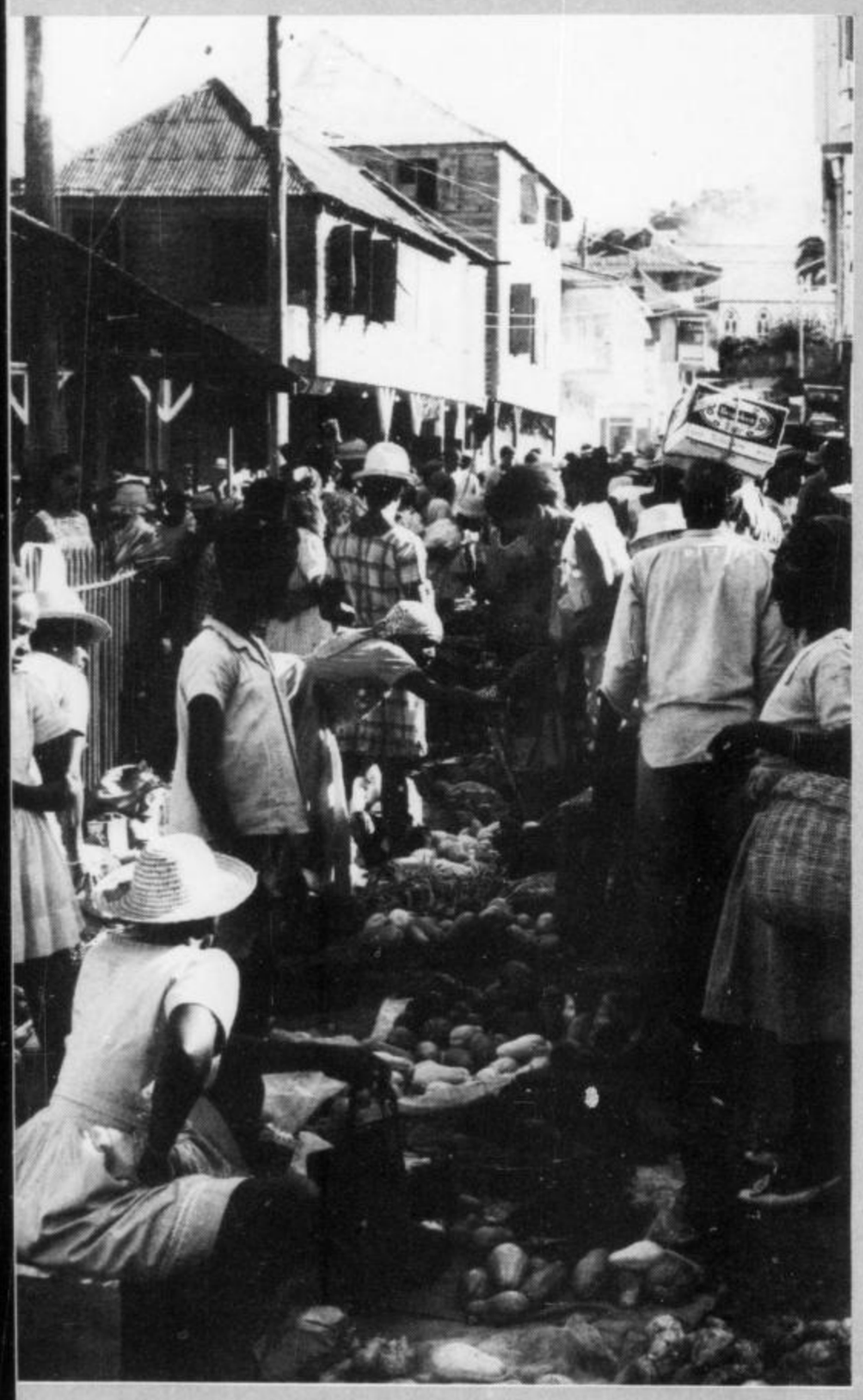
[2]Yaranga: a kind of yurt used in the northeastern regions of Siberia.

[3]Aoul: a village in the Caucasus or central Asia.
[4]Kichlak: a village of central Asia.

Tell me
fi its really
what yuh feel

tell mi
fi yuh really want fi hear
how dem want
fi play pon wi fear
an if wi don't kick up a fuss
dem a guh reduce
us
to atmospheric dust
or
tell mi
fi yuh really want fi si
de dutty guh remain
slippery
while dem trick wi
with lies and secrecy
fi run wi thru a sieve
fi mek wi remain
conservitive
suh dat can exploit wi
or
tell mi
fi its really what yuh feel
when ah tell yuh
ah have dis new need
dat grip wi
with such intensity
dat it bound fi peel
off bureaucracy
tell mi
if it's really what yuh feel
for it ah bust up
innsa mi ead
how dem ah manufacture de lead
fi come profit off a dead
suh disrepect wi anger
dat want fi bust up
ah reactor
fi get wi release
an mek wi realize wi peace
tell mi
it's really what yuh feel

Michael Smith



Market scene in the North Clarendon area of Jamaica.

Photo FAO, Rome

Dan is deh man in deh van

Accordin' to deh education yuh get when yuh small
Yuh will grow up wit true ambition an respect fuh one
[and all
Buh in meh days ah school dey teach yuh like a fool
Deh tings dey teach, yuh could be a blockheaded mule

Deh poems and deh lessons dey write an send from
[Englan'
Impress me, dey were tryin' to cultivate comedians
Comic book made more sense, yuh know is fiction
[wit'out pretence
**Cutridge wanted to keep us in ignorance*

Ah say Cutridge he was plenty times more advance dan
[dem scientists
Ah can' believe dat no one man can write so much
[shtupidness
Aeroplanes didn' come so good
Scientists used to make deh grade wit' balloons
Cutridge make a cow jump over deh moon

An den he tell dem Tom Tom deh piper's son
Steal a pig an away he run
Once there was a woman who lived in a shoe
She had so many children she didn' know wah to do
Hickery, dickery, dock, deh mouse ran up deh clock
Deh lion and deh mouse, a woman pushin' a cow to
[eat grass on top a house
An Dan is deh man in deh van
Can a pig dance a jig fuh a fig

How ah happen to get some education meh friends me
[ain' know
All dey teach me is about Brer Rabbit and
[Rumpetinskino
Dey wanted to keep me down indeed, dey try dey best,
[buh didn' succeed
Yuh see me head was duncey an up ta now ah can'read
An Dan is deh man in deh van

Mighty Sparrow

***Author of a reading primer for young children**

VALLVERDU, Francesc

Spain's language mosaic

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 recognizes the plurilingualism of the Spanish State, which has four official languages: Castilian (or Spanish) which is the official language throughout Spain; Catalan, or the language spoken in Catalonia, the Valencia region and the Balearic islands; Gallego (or Galician), which is the language of Galicia; and Basque (or Euskera), the language spoken in the Basque country and Navarre. Twenty-two million Spaniards live in regions where only one official language (Castilian) is spoken, and nearly sixteen million live in areas with two official languages (see table on page 26).

As the official language of the State, *Castilian* is a language which all Spaniards are required to know by law.

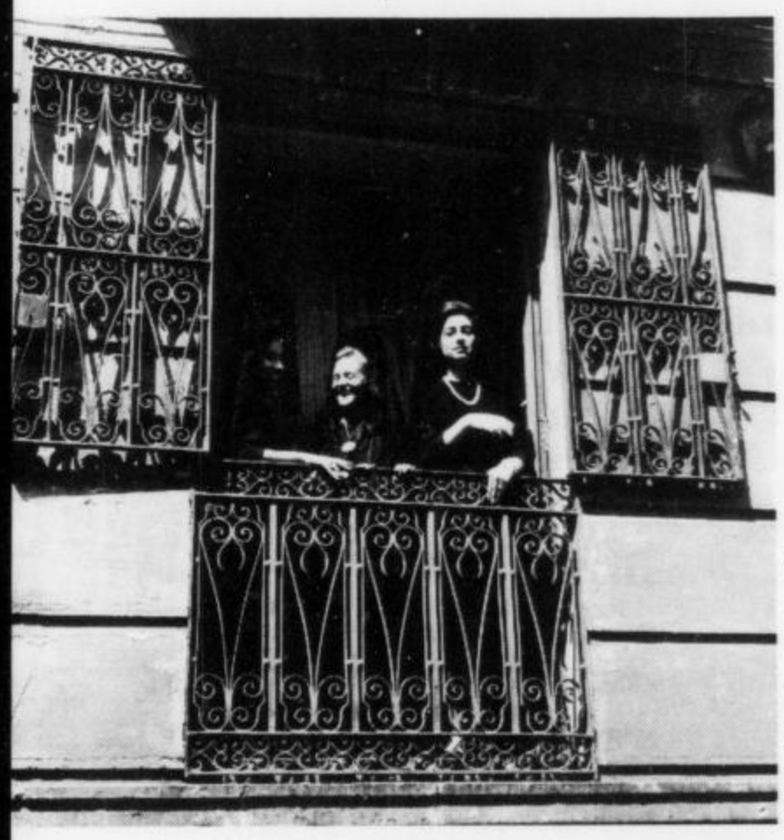


Photo Yan © Rapho, Paris

The language of Castile, Castilian Spanish, is the official language of all Spain. But it is also an international language which is spoken on several continents and especially throughout Hispanoamerica. In Spain three other languages share official status with it in their respective communities. They are* Catalan, Euskera *(Basque) and* Gallego *(Galician). Above, smiling spectators during Holy Week in Seville.

Accordingly, it is a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools in Spain and is virtually the exclusive language of all branches of government. Furthermore, the nation-wide press, radio and television only use Castilian apart from one Barcelona newspaper published in Catalan and a small number of radio and television stations broadcasting in Catalan, Euskera or Gallego. Lastly, Castilian is the vehicle of communication of Spanish citizens belonging to different language groups.

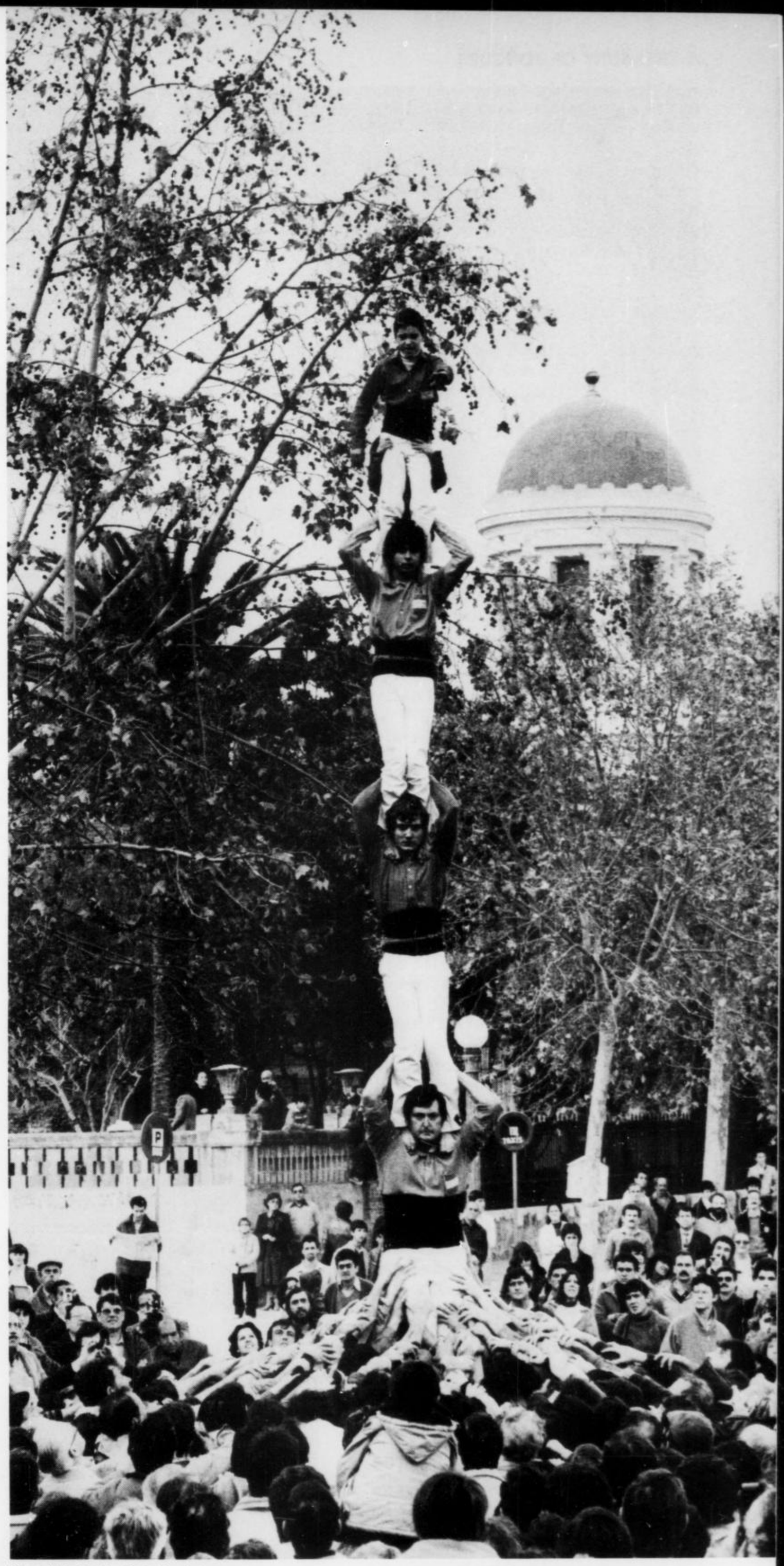


Photo J.M. Charles © Rapho, Paris

Catalan is one of the three minority languages which coexist in Spain with Castilian. Its roots, like those of Castilian and* Gallego *(Galician) lie in the ruins of Latin. Catalan is spoken by over 6 million Spaniards in the autonomous communities of Catalonia, Valencia and Majorca. Above, an open-air gymnastic display has drawn a crowd at Vilanova, near Barcelona.

Although, like other European languages, Castilian is suffering more and more from penetration by English, especially as far as so-called "mass culture" is concerned, its survival is ensured not only by its ranking as the most widespread language and its resulting greater public impact, but also by its international character, and especially the fact that it is spoken in almost the whole of Latin America. With this large market open to it, it has a competitive edge in both book and newspaper publishing and in the production of films, radio and TV programmes, gramophone records, and so on, compared with the minority languages, whose efforts in these directions are more costly and require more protection from the authorities. This preponderance is illustrated by the fact that, out of the 29,286 books published in Spain in 1981, 26,721—or over 91 per cent—represented titles published in Castilian.

Catalan is a Romance language like Castilian and is spoken mainly on Spanish territory, but also in south-eastern France—in the "Pyrénées-Orientales" Department—in the town of Alghero on the Italian island of Sardinia, and in the principality of Andorra. Catalan had a glorious period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, when its literature flourished, but it lost its official status in the eighteenth century, as a result of the War of Succession. The three main Catalan-speaking areas forming part of the Spanish State are as follows:

Catalonia. The Catalan people have never ceased speaking their own language, not even at times when they were persecuted. In 1931, with the coming of the Republic, Catalonia regained its autonomy and with it the official use of Catalan until 1939, when General Franco established a rigidly centralist régime and banned the public use of the minority languages. Since 1979, Catalonia has had a new Statute of Autonomy, which lays down the official character of Catalan, together with Castilian.

In all Catalonian schools, the two languages are compulsory, regardless of which is the language of instruction. In secondary and higher education, both languages are used as vehicles of instruction. The output of books in Catalan has been growing steadily in the past few years: in 1981, 2,140 titles were published in that language. On the other hand, the position in the other communication media is less satisfactory: only one of the six daily newspapers published in the capital, Barcelona, is entirely in Catalan; the two State-owned television channels usually broadcast in Castilian and devote only twenty-six hours a week to Catalan; radio stations do not feature many programmes in Catalan either, although there are several FM stations whose programmes are exclusively in that language; Catalan-speaking films are likewise few in number. This situation bears no relation to the socio-linguistic facts of Catalonia, where most of the population (68 per cent) speaks Catalan and some 85 per cent of the population is reckoned to understand it, although it is true that the inhabitants include many Castilian-speakers from other parts of Spain.

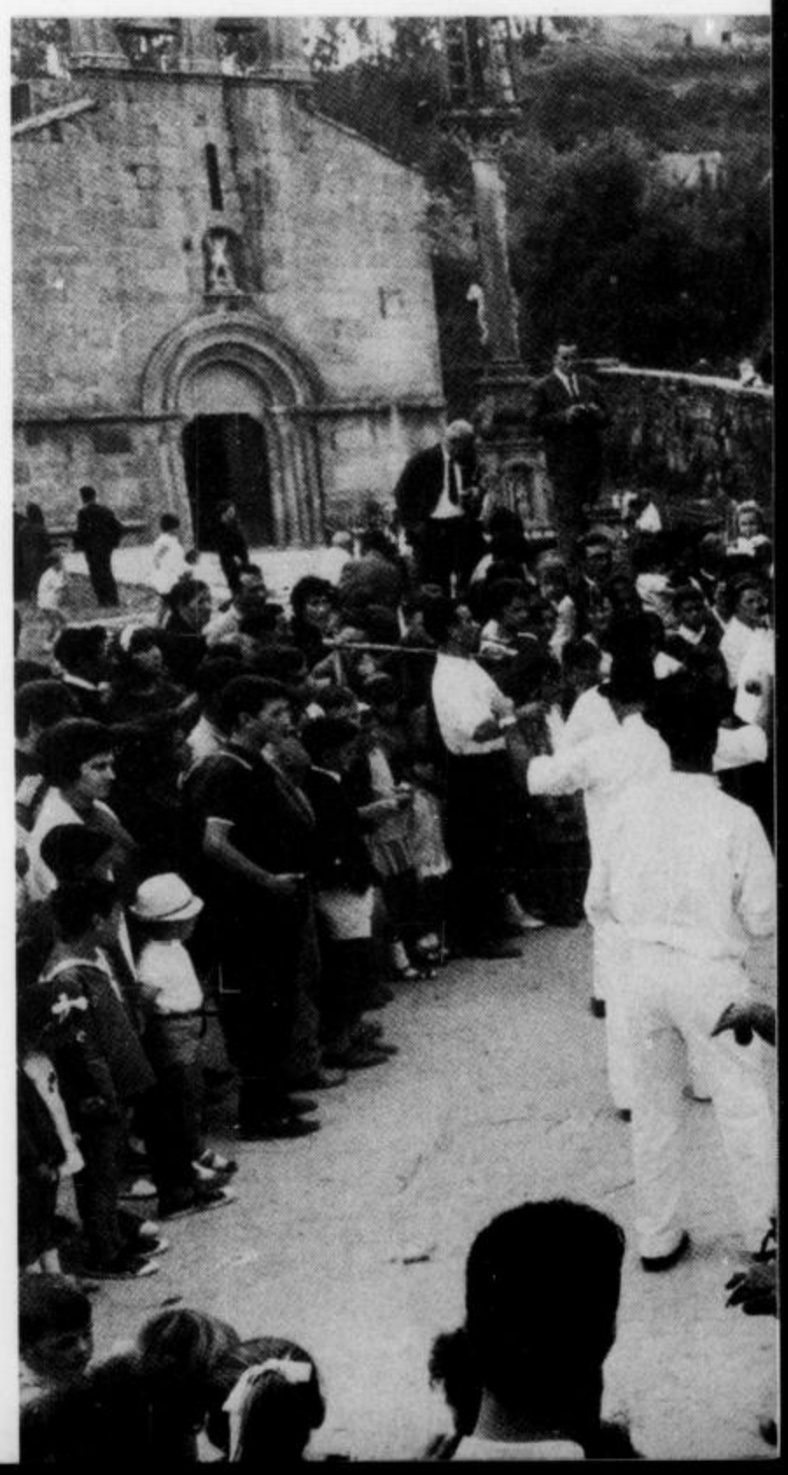
The Valencia region. Owing to special historical circumstances and to the fact that part of the Valencia region is Castilian-speaking, the autochthonous language has tended to lose more ground: for example, in Valencia and Alicante, the two largest cities, less than 40 per cent of the people habitually speak Valencian, although some 80 per cent of the population as a whole can understand it. Furthermore, the form of the language spoken in the Valencia region has given rise to controversy between those who claim that Valencian is an independent language separate from Catalan and those who regard it in the light of historical and linguistic considerations as being a regional variant of Catalan. In general, the advocates of the former view, who are a socially very influential minority, are not interested in their "language" being used for public purposes, whereas the second school, while not overlooking the dialectical features of the language, demand that it be fully standardized and used in public. The Statute of Autonomy of the Valencian "Community" officially recognizes the two languages, but only in regard to the easternmost districts, since the hinterland is Castilian-speaking.

The Balearic Islands. It is reckoned that some 80 per cent of the population speaks Catalan in one of its different dialect forms, i.e. on the islands of Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza and Formentera. The Statute of Autonomy for the Balearics recognizes the official character of Catalan as a specific language of the archipelago, together with Castilian.

Galician (Gallego). Galician is also a Romance language that is closely related to Castilian and is spoken in the north-western corner of the Iberian peninsula. In the Middle Ages, the language spread southwards and was responsible for the formation of Portuguese. The number of Galician-speakers is more or less the same as the number of inhabitants of the region, to which almost a million Galician-speaking emigrants must be added.

The 1981 Statute of Autonomy for Galicia recognizes Galician as a specific language and accords it official status, together with Castilian. The revival of Galician is taking place at a pace which varies from sector to sector: for instance, while only 41 per cent of all schoolchildren received instruction in Galician in the 1980-1981 academic year, a large number of lectures were given in the language at university level. Similarly, although there is no daily newspaper written entirely in Galician, a number of scientific periodicals are published in the language. In addition, 201 books in Galician were published in 1981. Galician radio and television programmes are still very few in number.

Euskera, the Basque language, is unrelated to any other language spoken in Europe. Its origins are uncertain. On account of its peculiarity, it has attracted the interest of many linguists and anthropologists. Today Euskera is



Autonomous Communities of Spain in which there is a second official language in addition to Castilian

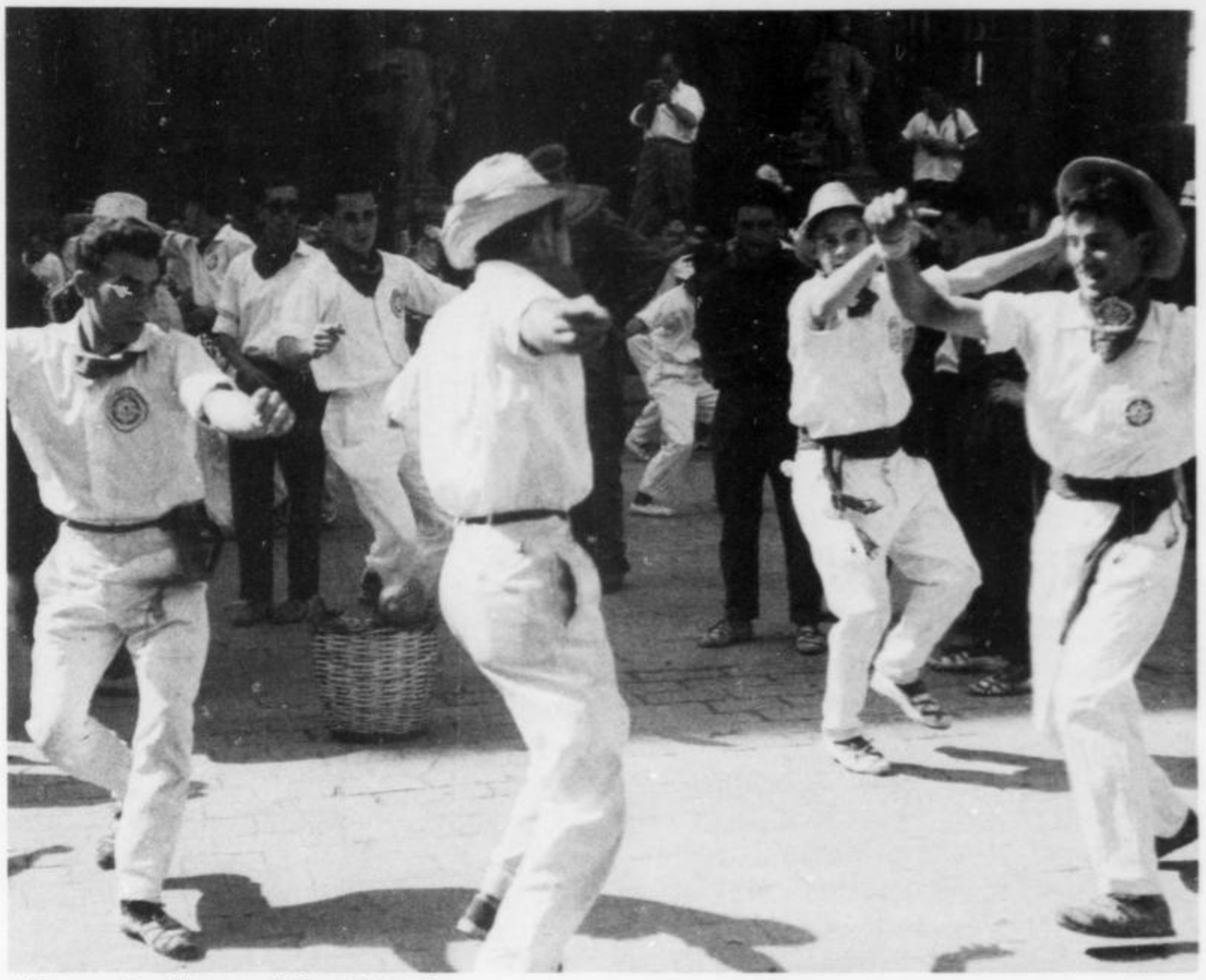
Languages	Autonomous Communities	Area [4] in km²	Population [4]
Catalan	Catalonia	31,932	6,000,000
	the Valencia region [2]	23,260	3,700,000
	Balearic Islands	4,942	700,000
Gallego	Galicia	29,422	2,800,000
Euskera [1]	Vascongadas (Euskadi) (the Basque provinces)	7,250	2,200,000
	Navarre [3]	10,421	500,000

1. Euskera *or* Euskara *is the Basque name for the language, which is traditionally known as* Vascuence *in Castilian Spanish.*
2. *In the Statute of Autonomy the autochthonous language is referred to as* Valenciano, *the traditional name given to the Catalan language in the region.*
3. *Basque is an official language only in the northern part of Navarre.*
4. *Total area of Spain: 504,744 km². Population: 37,700,000.*

spoken in seven regions, three belonging to France (Basse Navarre, Laburdi and Zuberoa) and four belonging to Spain (Navarre, and Vascongadas or the Basque Provinces: Alava, Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya).

Although some 2,000 years ago the Euskera-language territory covered an area four or five times larger than it does today, it declined slowly until the eighteenth century, and more quickly since then. Today it is reckoned that Basque-speakers account for only 11 per cent of the population of Navarre. As for the Vascongadas—or, to give them their official title, the "Autonomous Community of the Basque Country"—some 23 per cent of the population speak Euskera.

The difficulties involved in achieving linguistic standardization for Euskera are greater than those for Catalan or Galician, not only on account of the ground it has lost in its home region but also because of its unique nature, the difficulty of learning it, and the creation of neologisms. Even so, despite the fact that in the 1960s Euskera seemed to be a dying language, there are clear signs that it is now on the road to recovery. Political autonomy (the Statute was approved in 1979) is not the only factor accounting for this situation; there has also been a widespread campaign to inform public opinion. Special mention must be made of the *ikastolas,* private schools in which Euskera is the language of instruction. These schools are now largely integrated into the public educational system. In the 1981-1982 academic year, more than 15 per cent of Basque schoolchildren were taught in Euskera, while the rest were taught in Castilian with Euskera as a compulsory separate subject.



Above, the fiesta of San Fermín at Pamplona, capital of the Autonomous Region of Navarre. **Euskera** ***(Basque) is spoken and has the status of an official language only in the north of Navarre and in the Autonomous Community of Euskadi (the Basque Country). Spain's fourth official language,*** **Gallego,** ***is spoken in Galicia, in the north-western corner of the Iberian peninsula. Photo below shows the pilgrims' dance at the fiesta of San Roque at Hio in the Galician province of Pontevedra.***

Photos © A. Muioz de Pablos, Paris

Shortcomings are more serious as far as the Basque-language situation in the media is concerned, in that there are only two bilingual daily newspapers containing features and information in Euskera, although a number of magazines are published in the language. The State radio and television system does not broadcast programmes in Euskera, although a Basque regional government television centre began broadcasting for four hours a day in 1983, and this may go some way to filling the gap. In 1981, 224 books were published in Euskera.

In short, the well-worn image of Spain is changing as the new situation of four official languages comes into effect—although the change has as yet scarcely begun. Thousands of signposts have been replaced or supplemented on motorways and roads and in towns and villages, but much still remains to be done. Government departments are endeavouring to adjust to the demands of official bilingualism, in instances where this exists. Schools and other educational institutions have incorporated or are incorporating languages that were formerly banned into their curricula, although the re-adaptation process is not as rapid as might be wished. The communication media are facing material difficulties in broadcasting in these languages, and consequently the authorities should give them encouragement. We are facing a historic challenge; if we take it up successfully, it will be possible to say that everyone has gained from it, in that the centuries-old cultures expressed in these four languages, whose disappearance would have been a serious loss for world culture, will have been preserved and developed and the young Spanish democracy will have been strengthened. ■

III. The three Ts — teaching, translating, transcribing

Reproduction of a page from the **Codex Benedictus**, *an 11th-century manuscript from the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, Italy, now preserved in the Vatican Library (see* **Unesco Newsroom** *page 34).*

Photo © Vatican Library, Rome

CHARAUDEAU, Patrick

The culture shock of language learning

Until the beginning of this century, foreign languages were taught like dead languages such as Latin. On the one hand there was the vocabulary, on the other the grammar, two quite separate fields of study. Translation was the main teaching method.

This so-called traditional conception was criticized and replaced here and there, by the *audio-oral* method in the United States and by the *direct method* in Europe. These methods enjoyed a certain success in the years after World War II and marked the first departure of modern-language teaching methods from those of teaching dead languages. They were based on the principle of treating a foreign language from the oral point of view, of encouraging the pupil to speak (through question and answer), and of bringing him into contact with the everyday environment (learning how to name things).

In the 1960s and 1970s audio-visual methods appeared in Europe in the wake of structural linguistics, which were then winning acceptance in university teaching. These methods were based on a structural-global methodology originating in research into the basic foundations of the language (Basic English, *Français fondamental*). Their aim was to present a language in the act of communication, through simulated dialogues accompanied by situations depicted in images. Systematized exercises were used to enable the learner to acquire the basic structures of the language before going on to dramatizations in class to teach the learner how to use his knowledge in different situations.

However, in the 1970s audio-visual methods also came under fire. In linguistics the success of the concept of *enunciation* was dethroning the idea of language as an object of study. Language was no longer considered as an absolute, disembodied entity but as an act of communication linked to the speaker's situation as a producer in society. The notion of linguistic competence was replaced by that of *communicative competence*. A new hypothesis appeared: the learner's motivation to learn a foreign language may be related to the extent to which the language is taught in a way corresponding to his *needs*. For example, the specialist may only learn what relates to his own speciality (teaching with specific objectives). As this notion

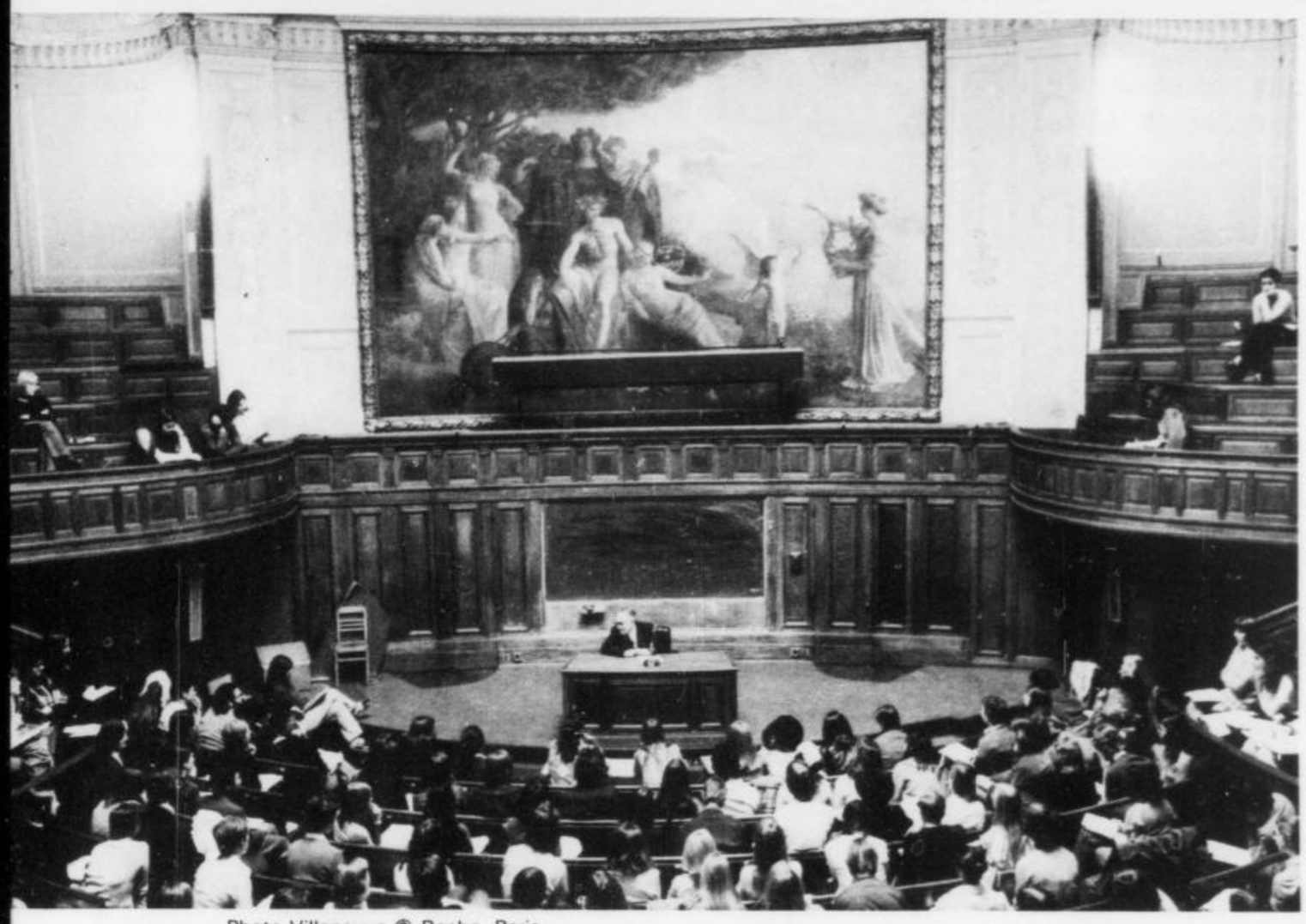
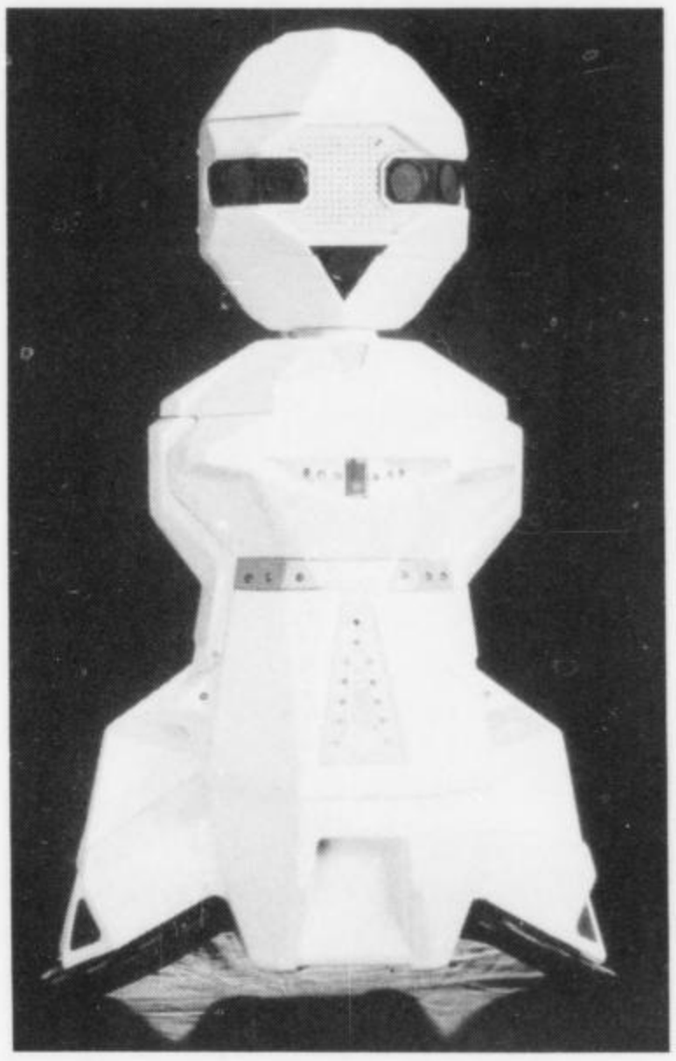


Photo Villeneuve © Rapho, Paris

"... Perhaps the most important development in the teaching of foreign languages is a new awareness of the* intercultural *issues involved." Above, lecture hall at the Sorbonne, Paris.



This curious little character (90 centimetres tall) is a robot endowed with artificial intelligence. His name is BOB (Brain on board) and he was "born" a few months ago in the United States. Thanks to his sophisticated "brain" and his capacious memory of 3 million octets, he decides where he wants to go next, what he wants to say and who he wants to say it to. Among his other accomplishments, he can teach foreign languages. And when his energy starts to give out he goes off to recharge his batteries at the nearest electricity plug.

Photo © Androbot, *Sciences et Avenir*, Paris

of education. The institutional character of education is no longer the same, and differs from one cultural context to another.

In some countries the task may be to promote an active form of learning by encouraging pupils to participate, in others social customs will require teaching and learning to be conceived as a "show". The approach will depend ultimately on the society's image of the role and power of the word.

Perhaps the most important development in the teaching of foreign languages is a new awareness of the *intercultural* issues involved. This awareness alone can bring about a final break with the universalist conception of language teaching, which still persists in a different modern guise. The idea has been launched that the pupil's essential purpose should be to learn about the foreign culture and in so doing to learn about his own, that the "culture shock" of discovering something new and different should also lead to self-discovery. In this setting the teaching of languages would be above all an opportunity to become aware of different mental approaches, of the different forms of imagination which exist in different societies and cultures. ■

LILOVA, Anna

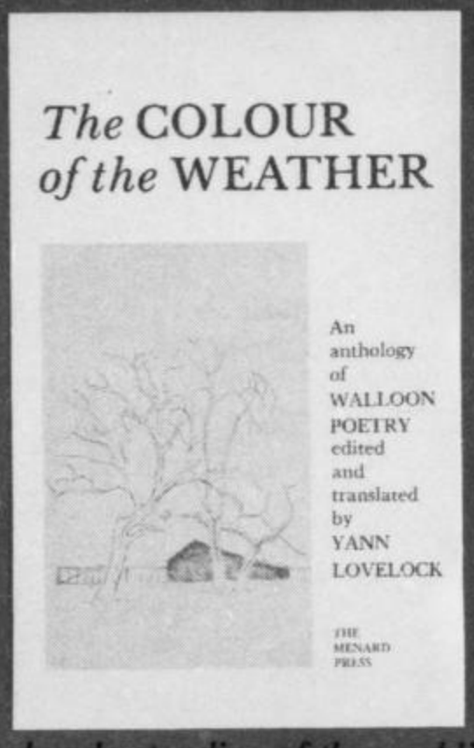
The translation explosion

A rapid growth is taking place in translating at the present time, both in terms of quantity and of quality. Information supplied by 61 countries indicates that during 1978 alone 57,158 books were translated. This phenomenon is explained by the constantly growing need of individuals and peoples to communicate. It is now realized that, irrespective of national, social and linguistic differences, it is only through cultural co-operation that progress in science, literature or education can be achieved.

The extraordinary changes represented by modern communication techniques give men ever greater access to cultures other than their own. In this way, each of us can discover new values, become aware of modes of behaviour with which we were previously unfamiliar and get to know mankind in all its diversity. This phenomenon, which has developed particularly since the Second World War, has considerably increased the demands made on translators, because of need has broadened, a "universalizing" attitude has disappeared from language teaching and been replaced by an attitude towards a given learner and his needs. Thus began the era—which still exists—of the *functional* and the *communicative*.

Today, on the eve of the 21st century, there is a realization that not one but several issues are involved in language teaching. There is the scientific, interdisciplinary issue—a refusal to submit to the imperialism of linguistics and a belief that, in the human sciences, modern thought can no longer be divided into watertight compartments. It is already apparent that certain attempts to create common ground for interdisciplinary reflection lead to demystification which is beneficial to science and education.

There is a new social situation owing to the growth of the school population and the number of people requiring training; its main characteristic is a change in the symbolic social function



Photos Unesco

For many years Unesco has sought to contribute to a broader international understanding of the world's literary heritage by promoting the translation and publication, mainly in English and French, of representative works of literatures written in the less widely known languages. Since the inception of this "Unesco Collection of Representative Works" nearly 800 titles have been published from over 40 Oriental and some 20 European languages, as well as from languages of Africa and Oceania. Above, covers of four works in the Collection.

it means that one must be in a position to overcome the obstacles caused by a multiplicity of languages.

The existence of many languages, as symbolized by the Tower of Babel, has often been deplored in the past. For centuries, hope persisted that a new *lingua franca* would emerge which would become the common language of all mankind. Descartes pleaded for the creation of a language that would be as universal as mathematics and the idea of creating an ideal language occurred to many other philosophers, logicians and mathematicians, such as Leibniz, Carnap, Wittgenstein, Russell. Up to the 1950s, more than four hundred so-called "universal" languages had been invented.

These efforts enriched linguistics and led to the currently popular idea of translations by computer. But the limits of human capacity and of the capacity of the machine are known. The flexibility of a language cannot be confined within a formal framework, it remains and will always remain in the domain of human intelligence and sensitivity. No machine can convey the "genius of a language" as a conscientious, experienced and gifted translator can.

Some people still imagine that increasingly sophisticated computers will be able to perfect a "working language" which will be so simple and efficient as to be accessible to all. Sooner or later, perhaps, such an artificial language will come into use. But is it possible or desirable? Nowadays linguistic groups assert their identity through the right to express themselves in their own languages because languages are symbols of independence. There are 2,796 languages and

Photo © Giraudon, Paris

The problems of translation have been recognized since antiquity and were expressed by St. Jerome (c. 340-420), the learned Father of the Roman Catholic Church who was the translator of the Latin Bible, the Vulgate, from Hebrew and Greek originals. In this woodcut by the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) St. Jerome is shown in his cell accompanied by a lion whose friendship he is said to have won by extracting a thorn from its paw.

8,000 dialects in the world, but more than two-thirds of the world's population speak 27 languages, while less than one third speak the others, so that professional intercourse, which is regulated by economic and political needs, draws upon a limited number of languages.

It may be asked whether such a limitation is justified from a cultural point of view. The new multilingual African States, for example, are making efforts to assert themselves by developing their national and written languages. These languages, which were suppressed or neglected in the past, are now being improved. They are being enriched through direct or indirect contacts with other cultures, thus opening the way for the development of national literatures, sciences and techniques. Translating has an important rôle in this process, and the requirements of the African continent in translators and translations are enormous.

Translating has special responsibilities to national cultures of the smaller peoples and to the less-widely spoken languages. It has a twofold function—to disseminate these cultures abroad through their irreplaceable original identity, and to enrich and fertilize them through contributions from elsewhere. Translated books preserve and express these two functions, they serve as a link between the particular and the universal.

In the past, translations served as a leaven. In the ninth century, the works translated by the brothers Cyril and Methodius, who invented the alphabet of the Slavs, made possible the development of national literatures throughout the Slav-speaking nations of Europe. Similarly, the flowering of German prose was preceded by Luther's translation of the Bible. Translation has a multiplier effect on the scientific, literary and aesthetic potential of the contents of books.

In Unesco Member States taken as a whole, an average 39 per cent of all books published are translated. The countries with the highest output of translated works are (according to the 1982 Unesco Statistical Yearbook figures relating to 1978): France 8,350 (figure for 1977 and 1978 combined), Federal Republic of Germany 7,168, USSR 7,023, Spain 5,543, Japan 2,307, Denmark 2,014, Italy 1,738, United Kingdom 1,494.

The fact that a number of countries, especially developing countries, produce fewer translations is largely due to the high cost (authors' and translators' royalties), to the lack of printing facilities and high production costs (printing and paper).

The International Federation of Translators, which comprises 40 associations of scientific, technical and literary translators and translation theoreticians, is a non-governmental organization attached to Unesco. Since its establishment in 1953, it has been under the direction of personalities remarkable for their enthusiasm and devotion to translation, including the late Pierre-François Caillé who presided over it for many years. The principal aims of the Federation are to bring together and organize translators' associations throughout the world, to defend the moral and legal rights of translators, to further the circulation of translated books and of the cultural values of all peoples, and to assert the prestige of the translator in the world of today.

The numerous initiatives undertaken by the Federation include the organization of world congresses, of national and international meetings, round tables and symposia, publication of the review "Babel", the circulation and implementation of the Recommendation of Unesco Member States regarding the moral and legal rights of translators and participation in the International Book Commission. That all these initiatives have been possible is largely thanks to the assistance of Unesco. As Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco has pointed out, "translators maintain the ongoing dialogue between different civilizations and have thus contributed to the contacts and harmonious relations between them". ■

PEKHLIVANOV, Ilya

Bulgaria's first language laboratory

Over the past five years, Bulgarian archaeologists have brought to light rich evidence of the intense literary activity of the disciples of St. Cyril and St. Methodius (brothers who in 863 invented the Cyrillic alphabet) after their arrival in Bulgaria. In 1978, the remains of a monastery were found near Ravna on the shores of the Black Sea some 70 kilometres west of Varna. So far 200 inscriptions and 600 rock carvings have been uncovered which have given a great impetus to Slav epigraphical studies.

What conclusions can now be drawn from these discoveries? According to the Bulgarian archaeologist Kazimir Popkonstantinov, the monastery was built during the second half of the ninth century on a site of about 8,000 square metres. A church, a 35-metre-long scriptorium, living quarters and a bathhouse have been uncovered. An inscription indicates that the church was built in 889. The monastery was doubtless destroyed during the Pecheneg invasion in the second half of the eleventh century.

The limestone walls of the church and the scriptorium are covered with inscriptions and paintings. The inscriptions are in several different scripts, including Runic, Greek, Glagolitic and Cyrillic, and some are inscribed in both Greek and Old Bulgarian. They represent the beginnings of the creation of a medieval Bulgarian and Slav literature.

Notable among the drawings are representations of horsemen and shamans (pagan priests) as well as of the "horse" and the "cross", symbols of the dramatic clash between Paganism and Christianity in the Balkans. There are also portrayals of a few Christian saints, including St. Basil and St. Alexis, as well as of the Ascen-

Two of the 200 inscriptions carved on stonework which have so far been discovered during excavations of a monastery (late 9th century) near Ravna in Bulgaria. The inscription below is in old Bulgarian. The name of Pope Clement I of Rome (88-97) can be deciphered in the inscription above, written in Greek and old Bulgarian.

Photos © Kazimir Popkonstantinov, Sofia

sion. There are also drawings of various animals—stags, goats, wolves and hares.

Vignettes and engravings similar to those that embellish the most ancient manuscripts in Old Bulgarian are also to be seen on the limestone walls, and the characters used in the inscriptions are identical in form and size to those on the old parchments. Clearly, the early Bulgarian scribes saw writing, whether on stone, ceramics or parchment, as the prime means of furthering their mission of instruction and evangelization.

What evidence is there that the disciples of St. Cyril and St. Methodius worked in this particular monastery? First, its location, a three-hour ride on horseback from Pliska, the first capital of the Bulgarian State, founded in 681, and the seat of Prince Boris I (852-889). Thus the monastery was a haven far from the disturbing influence of both the Byzantine clergy and the pagan proto-Bulgars who opposed the desire of Prince Boris to establish an independent Bulgarian Church whose mission would be to propagate Christian doctrine in the common language.

Furthermore, the name of Saint Clement, who as Pope Clement I (88-97) was the third successor of St. Peter in Rome, is mentioned in one of the inscriptions, and it was the brothers Cyril and Methodius who revived veneration for him as a Saint during the ninth century.

Finally, the layout of the church of Ravna is a faithful reproduction of that of the church at Pliska, the most important architectural monument of this period still preserved in the Balkans. This was no accident; all the buildings of the monastery were erected at the same time as part of an ensemble to which the State had devoted very considerable resources with the aim of creating a religious and cultural centre of the highest importance.

In August 1982, a number of experts on ancient Slav culture from eight countries attended a Symposium on medieval Bulgar literature and language, the most recent in a series of meetings organized every two years by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Clement Ohrid University of Sofia. The participants visited the Ravna site and their examination of the recent finds gave rise to keen debate and discussion.

Frederick Kortland, of the University of Leyden, in the Netherlands, summed up the opinions of the experts when he declared that: "The archaeological finds at Ravna may well cause us to revise and reconsider our views on ancient Slav history." ■

Photo © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

The heartless, hapless donkey

The long tradition of translation into Arabic goes back to the second century of Islam (8th century AD) when the Abbasid caliphs at Baghdad patronized a galaxy of brilliant translators who transmitted works of Western, Iranian and Hindu science to the Arab world. Notable among the literary works which also began to be translated into Arabic around this time was **Kalila and Dimna**, *a celebrated collection of moralistic animal stories translated from a Pahlavi (Persian) version of the Indian* **Fables of Bidpai**. *Abd Allah Ibn al Muqaffa, the translator, was also the author of other translations which introduced much of the Iranian literary tradition into Arab Islamic culture. Above, a page from the* **Kalila and Dimna** *story of a jackal living in a thicket with a lion weakened by an illness for which he has been prescribed as a remedy the heart and ears of a donkey. Illustration shows the jackal convincing a donkey (overworked and underfed by his master) to accompany him to a place where "he would find plenty of pasture and good company" but where in fact the lion is waiting for his medicine. The lion's first attempt to kill the donkey fails, but when the jackal succeeds a second time in persuading the donkey to accompany him the lion manages to kill the hapless beast. But before eating his heart and ears he goes to take a bath (a necessity if the cure is to be effective), and the jackal seizes the opportunity to eat them himself. Back from his bath the lion enquires, "But where are the donkey's heart and ears?" And the jackal replies, "Do you seriously think that, if he had a heart and ears, he would have come back to you after escaping death the first time?"*

I — A talking animal

ANTHONY BURGESS *is a British novelist, critic and man of letters. His works include* A Clockwork Orange *(1962, filmed 1971),* Nothing Like the Sun *(1964) a fictionalized version of Shakespeare's life, and* Here Comes Everybody *(1965) an introduction to James Joyce. His most recent novel,* Earthly Powers, *was published in 1980.*

CLIFFORD FYLE, *of Sierra Leone, is a Unesco programme specialist in African languages and a former Professor of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Sierra Leone. He is the author of poems and stories, some in Krio (the Creolized lingua franca of Sierra Leone) as well as studies on language teaching, African book development and African languages and linguistics.*

EDOUARD GLISSANT, *Martinican writer, is the author of many volumes of poetry, novels and essays, including* Les Indes, La Case du Commandeur, L'Intention Poétique *and* Le Discours Antillais. *His novel* La Lézarde *has appeared in English as* The Ripening Seed *(Braziller publishers, New York) and an English version of his play* Monsieur Toussaint *has also been published (Three Continents Press, New York). His poem* Le Sel Noir *has just appeared in the* Poésie/Gallimard *series.*

II — A treasury of tongues

GUY CLAUDE BALMIR, *of Haiti, studied at the universities of Boston and Paris and has since taught French, English and neo-African literature at universities in France and the United States, including Princeton.*

RUBEN BAREIRO SAGUIER, *Paraguayan poet, essayist and novelist, is engaged on research with the French National Centre of Scientific Research and formerly taught at the University of Paris. Among his published works are* A la vibora de la mar *and* Estancias/errancia/querencia *(poems),* Ojo por Diente *(stories), an essay on the Guarani literature of Paraguay, and two anthologies in French:* La Tête Dedans *(Amerindian myths, poems and stories) and* Anthologie de la Nouvelle Hispano-Américaine.

RAPHAEL CONFIANT and L. FELIX PRUDENT, *Martinican educators and researchers, are members of the* Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches en Espace Créolophone *and founder members of the* Association BanZill Kreyol.

ANDRE KEDROS *is a Greek author who writes in French. He has published a dozen novels which have been translated into as many languages and is also the author of a* History of the Greek Resistance *(Robert Laffont publishers, Paris). Under the pseudonym André Massepain, he has published many books for young people which have been widely translated and have won a number of awards.*

GASTON MIRON *is one of the leading figures in Quebec poetry and literature. His work as a poet and militant has appeared in* L'Homme Rapaillé *published in Montreal in 1970 and in Paris (Maspéro publishers) in 1981.*

DEBIPRASANNA PATTANAYAK, *of India, is Director of the Central Institute of Indian Languages at Manasagangotri (Mysore) and was formerly a teacher at several Indian universities. He is a member of the Linguistic Societies of India and of the United States, among other learned societies, and has published many studies on questions related to Indian languages.*

VLADIMIR MIKHAILOVICH SANGHI, *Soviet writer, is the founder of the literature in the Nivkh language of the USSR. The author of 18 books, he is Chairman of the Council for the Literatures of the Peoples of the North of the Writers' Union of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and a member of the regional interdepartmental commission of the Siberian sections of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.*

MICHAEL SMITH *is a well-known Jamaican poet. He grew up in the Jonestown district of Kingston (Jamaica) and has given voice to the popular culture of this ghetto, a culture which has become world famous through Reggae music. Michael Smith is equally known as a singer and as a poet: the oral and the written are tightly interwoven in his work.*

MIGHTY SPARROW, *of Trinidad and Tobago, is a calypso writer and singer who has dominated the calypso world for over 25 years. Calypsos, notably prepared for the annual carnival in Trinidad, express in satirical and humorous form popular feeling about people and current events.*

FRANCESC VALLVERDU, *Catalan writer, has taught sociolinguistics at a number of educational institutions and is currently a consultant with the Barcelona Institute of Sociolinguistics.*

III — The three Ts — teaching, translating, transcribing

PATRICK CHARAUDEAU, *of France, is professor of general linguistics at the University of Paris XIII and director of the* Centre d'Analyse du Discours *at the Universities of Paris XIII and Paris III. He is the author of many articles and essays on linguistics and language teaching. His most recent published work is* Eléments de Sémiolinguistique *(1982).*

ANNA LILOVA, *of Bulgaria, teaches the theory of translation at the University of Sofia. She has published a number of specialized articles and a monograph, "Initiation to the General Theory of Translation". Since 1981 she has been president of the International Federation of Translators.*

ILYA PEKHLIVANOV, *Bulgarian journalist, is editor-in-chief of* Za Bukvit — O Pismenekh, *a publication devoted to the work of Cyril and Methodius, and of the political and cultural weekly* Anteni. *He has published many articles on themes related to history and folklore and several books on Bulgarian history.*

Extracts from the message of the Director-General of Unesco to the meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

IT IS WITH PROFOUND SADNESS THAT I HAVE LEARNED THE GRIEVOUS NEWS FOR THE WHOLE OF AFRICA OF THE EXECUTION BY THE RACIST GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA TODAY, THURSDAY 9 JUNE 1983, OF THELLE SIMON MOGOERANE, JERRY SEMANO MOSOLOLI AND MARCUS THABO MOTAUNG, IN DEFIANCE OF THE MANY PRESSING APPEALS FROM SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS AND FROM THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PARTICULARLY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO **stop** THE ACT WHICH SOUTH AFRICA HAS JUST COMMITTED AT THE VERY MOMENT WHEN THE OAU SUMMIT MEETING IS TAKING PLACE IS A BLOW AT THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE AND CONSTITUTES A CHALLENGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND PARTICULARLY FOR AFRICA **stop**... THREE CENTURIES OF THE SLAVE TRADE DEPRIVED THE AFRICAN CONTINENT OF AT LEAST A HUNDRED MILLION OF ITS CHILDREN **stop** A CENTURY OF COLONIAL DOMINATION BROUGHT FURTHER MISFORTUNES **stop** THE WINNING OF INDEPENDENCE OPENED THE WAY TO A NEW DESTINY **stop** AND THE CREATION OF THE OAU IN 1963 WAS HAILED BY ALL THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA AS A RESOLVE TO BRING TO AN END THE MANY TRAGEDIES WHICH HAVE MARKED THE HISTORY OF THE CONTINENT **stop** TODAY NEW THREATS ARE GATHERING ON ALL FRONTS, WHICH COULD LEAD TO CATASTROPHES **stop** ONLY THE REDISCOVERED UNITY OF THE CONTINENT AND THE DETERMINED PURSUIT OF FRATERNAL CO-OPERATION ON THE BASIS OF THE IDEALS PROCLAIMED IN 1963 BY THE FOUNDERS OF THE OAU SEEM TO ME OF A NATURE TO WARD OFF THESE PERILS **stop** AND SO PERMIT ME TO ADDRESS TO YOU AN URGENT APPEAL THAT EVERYTHING BE DONE SO THAT THE SACRIFICE OF THE FINEST SONS OF AFRICA MAY NOT BE IN VAIN, AND TO WISH YOU ALL SUCCESS IN YOUR WORK **stop**.

AMADOU-MAHTAR M'BOW

UNESCO NEWSROOM

Unesco meeting reviews languages as cultural expression

A Unesco symposium on languages as an expression of cultural identity and an instrument of intercultural communication was held in Venice from 3 to 6 May 1983. Among the main questions discussed at the meeting, attended by 16 specialists from the different world regions, were the identification of "linguistic universals"—features common to all languages, and the prospects for linguistic studies offered by new information technologies, especially informatics. The results of the symposium will be the theme of a publication which is scheduled to appear in 1984.

Vatican library treasures in facsimile shown at Unesco

Superb examples of manuscripts from medieval and Renaissance Europe and the Islamic world, reproduced in faultless facsimiles, were exhibited at Unesco's Paris HQ from 9 to 16 May (see page 28). Ranging from magnificently illuminated religious works to maps and treatises on animals and heraldry, the exhibits were produced using the latest techniques for making exact copies, including scanners and lasers. Opening the exhibition, Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the Director-General of Unesco, noted that it was an "exceptional event" which revealed the great promise of new reproduction methods for making available the treasures of the Vatican Library and others around the world.

Language teaching in developing countries

The content and methods of language teaching in developing countries were examined at an international symposium of specialists held at Unesco's Paris HQ from 25 to 29 April 1983. Among the themes discussed were the changing objectives of language education as new development requirements emerge, the impact of new linguistic and pedagogical approaches on language teaching, and the preparation of teaching materials with improved relevance to national needs. The symposium was part of Unesco's efforts to promote mother tongues as instruments of education and culture.

Πικάσσο

Greek edition of the Unesco Courier

We are pleased to announce the launching of a Greek edition of the *Unesco Courier*, published by the Greek National Commission for Unesco, Akademias 3, Athens (134). The first issue of the Greek edition appeared in April 1983, bringing the total number of different language editions of the *Unesco Courier* up to 27, in addition to the quarterly Braille selection published in English, French, Spanish and Korean.

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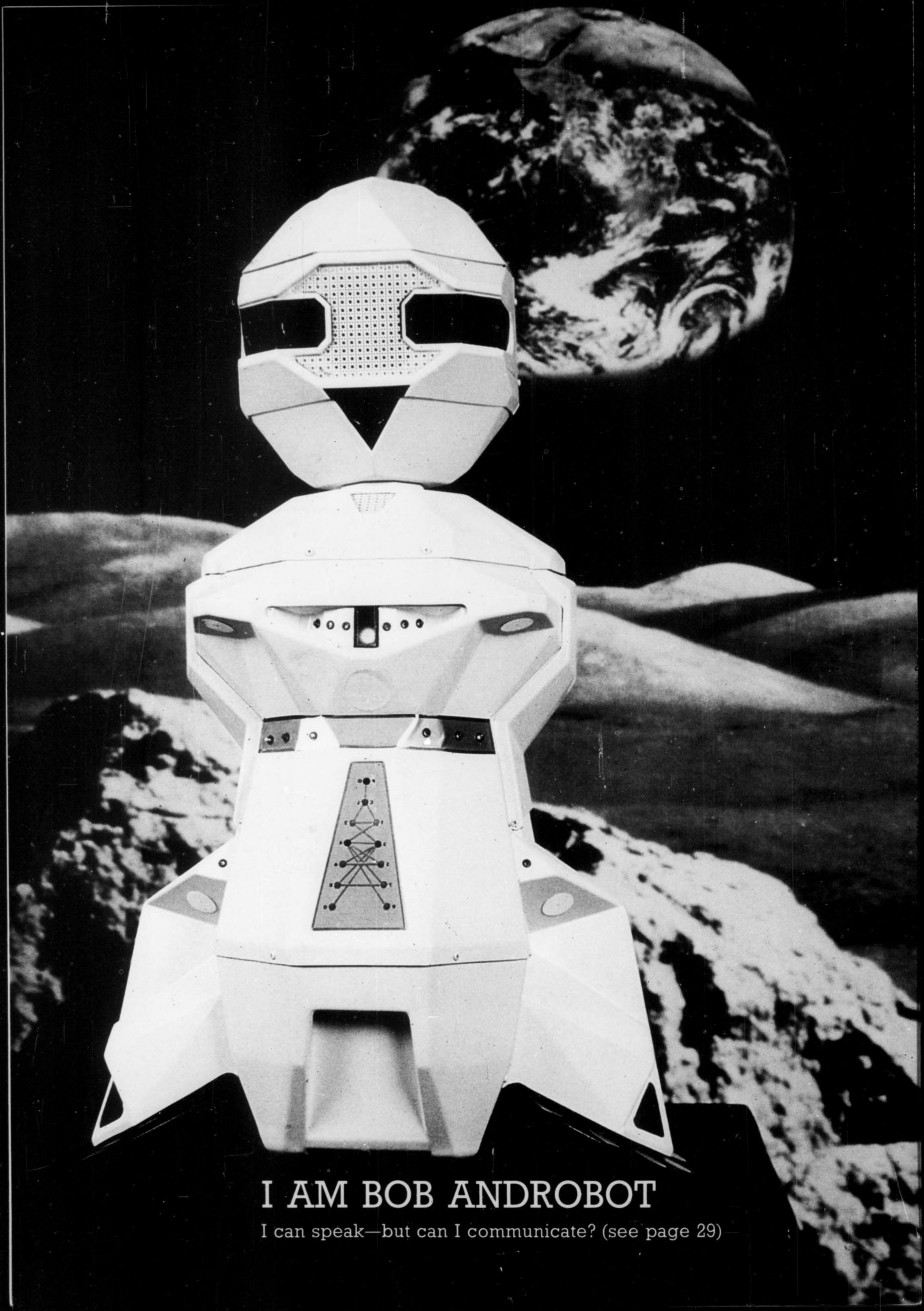

I AM BOB ANDROBOT

I can speak—but can I communicate? (see page 29)